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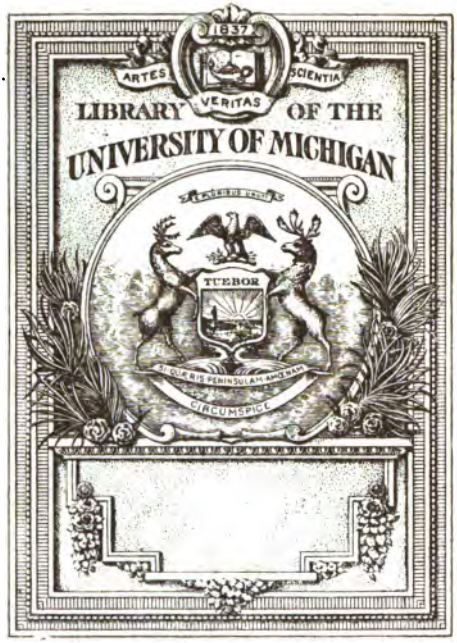

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WOOD LEIGHTON;

OR,

A YEAR IN THE COUNTRY.

BY MARY HOWITT,

AUTHOR OF "TALES IN PROSE,"

&c. &c.

"How fair thy vales, thy hills how beautiful!

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1838.

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WOOD LEIGHTON.

DENBOROUGH PARK.

PART II.

THE WORKING OF THE CURSE.

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning Walter awoke with renewed fealty of soul to his one-day-slighted Julia, and writing her a hasty but affectionate note excusing his absence at a moment when his presence was doubly needful to her, ordered his horse and set out on his way to the house of Colonel Haughton, principally with the design of clearing himself with the earl, and ascertaining the cause of that nobleman's displeasure and suspicion.

It was a long ride, and the noon was past when he arrived there. Colonel Haughton was a frank, cordial-hearted man, and received Walter with the greatest good-will, assuring him, even before

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he introduced the subject, that he entirely acquitted him, that, in truth, he had not for a single moment suspected him; "although his noble friend," he said, "had some queer notions, at the bottom of which he could not get."

He then excused himself with Walter, as the earl was at that moment leaving his house. The carriage was at the door, he said; the ladies and Mr. Finch were already gone.

Walter insisted on seeing the earl. His desire was immediately granted. The nobleman was naturally proud and implacable, and the interview was unsatisfactory.

He stood with his foot on the step of his carriage, and intimated that he was not to be detained. Walter, however, did detain him; but it was merely to hear "that nothing would give his lordship greater pleasure than to be convinced of his disconnexion with Mr. Grimstone; but he believed he had proofs to the contrary, more conclusive even than Mr. Walter Constable's present asseverations."

"What were they?" asked Walter with forced submission; "would his lordship be good enough to state them?"

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The earl looked at him as if amazed at his insolence, and declined to say further, desiring that his time might not be intruded upon.

Walter withdrew incensed and bewildered to the utmost, and the carriage drove off.

It was in vain that Walter turned over and over in his mind the insinuation of the earl; so entirely had he hitherto been disconnected with the three elder Grimstones, that he could find no circumstance on which to ground the insinuation. At length it occurred to him that it must be owing to something which Christopher had himself said; for did he not speak of a conversation with Miss Hammond of which himself had been the subject? The idea was plausible, and Walter burned with yet stronger impatience for the detection of the traitor. The more he thought of it, the more indignant he became: he was maddened almost to frenzy; he longed to challenge the earl—to make him prove or retract his words—to show to the whole world his detestation of the Grimstones, his entire disconnexion with them! "And this," thought Walter in his indiscriminate passion, "is the bitter fruit of this alliance: my name

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blasted—myself degraded into the reprobate associate of these outcasts of society !"

To a young man like Walter, with his keen sense of honour, his high moral purity, and fervent desire for distinction, what more cruel blow could have been given ? He vowed with himself to discover the traitor, be he where he would, and for this purpose again mounted his horse on his way to Justice Haliday's.

It was a melancholy ride. The afternoon was close and sultry; low electric clouds seemed to weigh heavy upon the very face of the earth. Walter's road too lay through the forest, where not a breath of air was stirring; the broad leaves of the trees stood motionless as if fixed in an atmosphere of quicksilver. Beyond this, it was the very road upon which the outrage had been committed; and in that depressing and stifling atmosphere, Walter felt an impatience and restlessness of spirit painfully at variance with the torpidity of his animal frame. He approached that part of the road where the dark and livid traces of blood yet remained frightfully distinct. It was with unmingled horror that he reached it and looked down upon the ghastly

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witness of the deed. Was it the blood of Christopher himself, or one of his brothers? Walter shuddered as he asked himself this question; and as he pondered upon the answer, his reflections grew awfully melancholy. There, at his very feet, lay the life-blood of a being whom but a few hours ago he had seen living, and, in the full intoxication of reckless and guilty youth, who had died a sudden and frightful death in the commission of outrage. What had followed —God of his just but awful judgment alone knew!

Walter's heart was overcome by these reflections, and spite of the inveterate hatred with which he had ridden up to the spot, he drew forth the small crucifix which lay upon his breast, and kissing it devoutly, offered up a prayer for the soul of the miserable departed.

This done, with much calmer and more Christian sentiment Walter proceeded on his way.

The justice, like Colonel Haughton, received him with the most entire friendliness; regretting extremely the annoyance to which he had been subjected, and deploring yet more and more the distress which his respected brother magistrate,

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the worthy Sir Harbottle Grimstone, must endure on account of his reprobate sons.

"A far greater mercy, Mr. Constable, it is," said his worship, in a voice of solemn and unfeigned thanksgiving, "to have no sons, than to have to see them thus peril and disgrace themselves, and thus bring sorrow on the grey hair of their parents! I am thankful to say, Mr. Constable, that I have no children!" And of course Walter congratulated the excellent magistrate on the happy circumstance.

The storm which had been collecting the whole afternoon came down shortly after Walter had arrived; and as it was then getting late, and there appeared no prospect of its present subsiding, Mr. Haliday, who was greatly pleased with his guest, insisted on his remaining there for the night. Walter consented, not without fears for the anxiety which his mother might feel on his account.

The storm, which abated towards bed-time, returned with tenfold force in the course of the night; and Walter, who could not sleep, rose from his bed, and partly dressing himself, looked out upon the deluged landscape, which ever and

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anon shone out in fierce brightness as the broad universal flashes of lightning descended at once, as if from every part of the heavens. He saw the near forest lying in profound blackness—lying like a wall of solid darkness against the illuminated sky. His eye became irresistibly attracted towards it, and he seemed to see, within some hidden thicket of its profound depths, as the lightning flashed downward into them—the disfigured and ghastly dead body! Walter thought he must dream, and roused himself into strong consciousness. Again the chilling horror crept over him, and the besetting vision was there; and as the succeeding glare flashed by, he saw again the ghastly upturned eye, and the bloody death-wound. Walter again believed that he had slept, though but for a moment, and that this was the creation of his excited imagination. He turned therefore to his bed, intending to compose himself to rest, but, spite of himself, yet once more returned to the window. At that very moment the dense black clouds seemed rent asunder, and the lightning, as if grasped into a gigantic handful, was hurled into the very centre of the forest. A frightful concussion succeeded—peal upon peal

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of deafening thunder, which shook the walls of the house and made every pane in the windows vibrate. A profound stillness succeeded; the lightning flashed again; but each succeeding flash grew paler, and the thunder less loud, till by degrees the storm entirely abated.

Walter returned to his bed, but, excited by what he had seen, and the fearful vision which had so frightfully haunted his imagination, it was long before he again slept. Nor did he wake till the slow pompous voice of the old magistrate summoned him at his chamber-door, with the information, not the most agreeable for an unrobed guest to hear, that he had been up for half an hour, and should be happy to take his breakfast whenever it was Mr. Constable's pleasure to make his appearance. It was fortunate for Walter that his host's patience was not made of glass. The two sat down to breakfast with mutual goodwill.

Walter spoke of the storm of the preceding night; but his host had not been disturbed. "He had," he said, "one deaf ear, and he always lay with that uppermost."

He had related to his host, the evening before,

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the whole particulars of the day passed at Tutbury, not omitting the apparent interest which Christopher Grimstone had in the good-will of Milly Freckleton and her grand-daughter. The justice had thought these things over, and now suggested to Walter that Grimstone might perhaps be concealed with these people. The same idea had occurred to him.

Attended therefore by proper officers with a search-warrant, as soon as breakfast was over he took his way towards the small hostelry at Tutbury, having promised, at Mr. Haliday's urgent injunction, to return again to an early dinner, in order that he might know the result.

Walter alighted at the door of the small public-house, and without ceremony entered the little parlour. All stood in the exact order in which he had last seen it. The old woman entered after him.

"Ay, bless you, sir," she began, wiping her eyes with her apron, "here is a pretty job! War it Mr. Christopher as lighted of his death? Pray, sir, tell me if you know!"

"I know not," replied Walter, "but am come to you for information."

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"Eh, sir, but you are come to a wrong body for that!—And hey-day!" exclaimed she, fixing her eyes on the men who attended Walter and had followed closely upon him, "and what have we here?"

The warrant was produced, and the old woman informed that her premises must be searched.

"Ay, ay, search and welcome!" said she: "I'll give ye leave to take whatever ye find that'll bring shame on Milly Freckleton!"

"How is your grand-daughter?" asked Walter.

"How is she?—why not much better for your asking after her! It's like to be the death of her, and of me too, for what I see; and now ye mun come here with your search-warrants, as if I harboured stolen goods!"

"My good woman," returned Walter, "nothing is wanted but the persons of these ruffians: you will do the country good service by delivering them up to the law!"

"I am no but a poor widow woman," she replied, "and live by my credit; and it can do me no service to have my house rauked over by a couple of catch-thieves. At that rate, I should like

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to know who is secure by his own fire-side? Onybody may get a search-warrant, if this is law, and enter his neighbour's house night or day! It 's not what I 've been used to, and I 'm none so fond of it!"

The constables entered, declaring they found no cause for suspecting the persons of the Grimstones to be concealed there.

"Ay, so I tould ye—I tould ye, ye might look and welcome, ye'd get nothing for your pains! A couple of hulking varlets! Get out of my house with ye—for turn you out I will, though I, maybe, was forced to let you in!"

The men went out, and Walter offered her half-a-crown, apologising for the disturbance they had occasioned. She pocketed the money, but still looked far from pacified.

"I took you for one of his friends," said she; "but I war mista'en, it seems!"

Walter again inquired after the grand-daughter, and if she were at home.

"Ay, ay, her 's at home!" replied poor Milly petulantly. "What! you hav 'nt a search-warrant for her, have you?"

Walter smiled, and replied that she was

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a pretty and modest young woman, therefore he had inquired after her.

"Why, if that's your business, it's soon done."

Walter was not satisfied, for he suspected that where Peggy was, there might Christopher be also; but he could get no farther information—the old woman was angry and sullen. But in going out, he saw the fair Peggy engaged in household-work. She was down upon her knees whitening the hearth-stone of a little side-room; and as she pursued the work unconscious of any observer, he saw the tears fall from her eyes upon the stone she was rubbing.

It was a simple picture of real sorrow, that touched Walter deeply. "Christopher Grimstone is not here," thought he, "or that poor girl would not weep thus at the moment of his escape!" Walter nevertheless was wrong. Christopher and his brother were both there, hidden in a small chamber of the roof. They were her own deep and secret heart-griefs which made Peggy Woodhouse water her household-work with her tears.

As Walter was returning to the house of the old magistrate, he saw the small, light figure of Daniel Neal stepping along at no measured pace.

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There was important meaning in his very gait; and it was not without a firm persuasion that the beggar had something to tell, that Walter overtook him, slackening his pace as he approached.

"Lord love you, Mr. Walter Constable!" exclaimed he, raising up both his hands at once; "you are the very man of all others that I wanted to see! Dismount, sir, and hear what I have to tell you!"

Walter dismounted; and Daniel then related, that being on his travels, though he must confess somewhat out of his usual round, he was the last evening overtaken by the storm in the midst of the forest, and had taken shelter under a miserable hut. That, in truth, to him, who was used to be out at all times and in all weathers, it was a matter but of little moment, for he could sleep as well in storm as in shine,—at least, when the storm was in a common way, but the last night's storm had been no common one, but one of God's messengers of judgment, said Daniel, crossing himself both on breast and forehead. He had lain awake, he continued, most of the night, and had seen old Malăbar, the deer-stealer, out on his maraudings even at such a time as that. But, however, that was

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neither here nor there with what he had to relate. He saw every distinct flash of lighting as it came; and at last, down from the very top of heaven, as if it had been a huge fiery ball, he saw the red thunder-bolt itself come down right over his head; and thinking at the very moment that his hour was come, he prayed to every saint to have mercy on his soul. However, sure enough the prayer was only thought, not said; for, before there was time to speak three words, the bolt fell at about ten yards' distance right upon a large forest-oak, riving it from top to bottom, splitting it asunder with a dreadful crash, and dividing it right and left. Dazzled and stunned with this strange and frightful death, which had been at hand, and yet slain not, Daniel described himself to have fallen flat on his face, and to have lain he knew not how long; he supposed, believing himself dead. When he came to himself again, it was daylight, and he got up thinking he had been in a dream; but the fallen and splintered tree was an evidence of the reality of what he had seen. He got up and went to the spot to examine more narrowly, "And may the blessed saints in paradise be about me!" exclaimed Daniel, "what should I see but the

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body of George Grimstone !—I knew it well by the cut over the left eyebrow: that was done when he was a lad. What should I see but this body, bloody and disfigured, lying in a thicket of holly which the thunder-stricken tree had parted in falling ! Tell me there's not a Providence in these things !" exclaimed he, striking his staff upon the ground with energy ;—" why otherwise was the thunder-bolt sent to strike that one tree only in the forest ; and why was I sent there, out of my regular course, but for one and the same purpose !" So saying, Daniel crossed himself with deep devotion and repeated a pater-noster. Walter did not deny what the beggar had asserted of the agency of Providence ; on the contrary, he thought him right ; and inviting him to follow to Justice Haliday's, again mounted his horse, and carried the news forward at full speed.

The magistrate being informed of this, set himself about to take all proper steps respecting it ; and Walter, directed by the beggar to the exact spot, rode forward to see for himself a place and event which had been so singularly visioned to him in the night.

The place itself was a small lawn-like opening

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in the very heart of the forest, and to which there was not even a foot-track,—a spot admirably chosen for the purpose of concealment. Impenetrable thickets of holly surrounded it, with but narrow openings between; and in the very centre of this oasis, had grown the tree which the lightning had struck. He found it cleft exactly down the middle, as Daniel had said, the two halves falling opposite ways; a strong branch of one division having completely opened the thick clump of holly in which the body had been concealed. The shed which Daniel had mentioned stood at right angles with the tree, and had been erected by bark-peelers at some distant time. It was now a picturesque object, half fallen to decay, such as a painter would have loved, and no one, save an out-of-doors dweller like Daniel Neal, would have thought of passing a night in.

At another time Walter might have looked on it with pleasure as an excellent and beautiful accessory of a fine bit of forest scenery; but he was in no mood now for such thoughts or such contemplations. The place was not solitary; several peasants were already there, sent thither by some rumour of the discovery which had got abroad. The body had been drawn forth from

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its concealment, and laid under the shed. It was without a doubt the body of George Grimstone, in the identical groom's livery which he had worn on that fatal day. A sickness, as of death, came over Walter as he recognised the body, and he leaned against the broken wall for support. An old woman, wrapped in a long grey cloak, and with a black handkerchief tied over her head, was looking on the body; and the peasants, seeing one with the appearance of a gentleman arrive there, hastily joined him.

"Ay, ay," said the old woman, observing Walter's emotion, "this is a Grimstone come by a violent death, — where 's the wonder? and the others are hiding in dens and caves of the earth! Well, well, it 's all right! There was a storm last night! — ha! ha! ha! Poor Dummie was struck with lightning. They told me so; and now, and now, you all see there lies a Grimstone! I knew what would happen,— I knew it five-and-thirty years ago. Well, I 'm an old woman now, and they call me mad; but I 've lived to see my words come true, and I may yet live to see more than this. Sorrow strikes as deeply as sin! But what of that, they are all Grimstones!" And so saying, she turned herself round and walked

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away, leaving the peasants looking one upon the other.

"Who is she?" at length asked Walter.

He was told that she was a poor woman, afflicted with periodical insanity, who lived in one of the forest villages, and was suspected at some former time to have lost a dumb child by lightning. Her name was unknown to every one, except that she called herself Judith.

Walter was unaccountably agitated by the words of the poor maniac; and taking from his pocket a slip of paper, upon which he wrote a request that his friend Justice Haliday would pardon him taking leave without further ceremony; and desiring one of the peasants to hand it to him without fail when he arrived there, as he shortly would do, with the coroner and other official persons, he remounted his horse, and took the forest-road through Newborough and Marchington homeward.

CHAPTER XI.

The news of the body being found was carried to Denborough Park by the good Father Cradock;

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and however strong had been the conviction of Julia and Bernard that it would prove to be their brother, the certainty was not received with less poignant distress.

Sir Harbottle heard the tidings with an unmoved countenance. "The rascal!" exclaimed he: "what! and I shall have two funerals on my hands at once!" He then turned round again to his bonds and mortgages.

The inquest taken on the body found a verdict of "Accidental death, caused by a wound given in defending the person of Miss Hammond from himself and his brothers."

The next evening, in the dusk hour, Father Cradock and Bernard saw the body decently interred in the nearest churchyard. Sir Harbottle Grimstone afterwards defrayed the expenses which had been laid down by the priest, but not without his demurring as to the necessity of several small items.

No sooner was it gone abroad that the dead man was of a surety George Grimstone, than tradesman after tradesman, and claimants of both sexes, who in a variety of ways had demands upon him, beset Sir Harbottle in his house, and when he walked abroad. "How," he exclaimed, "was he

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likely to pay money for which they had nothing to show?" No sooner was this said, than out came notifications and certifications, that such and such sums were justly due, and should be faithfully discharged on the demise of Sir Harbottle Grimstone, all properly signed by the veritable hand of his son George.

"But," replied the baronet, with imprecations upon his son which were terrible to hear, "that desirable event has not yet taken place!" And the unsatisfied claimants were dismissed, denouncing vengeance on Sir Harbottle and his family, and leaving him even more than ever filled with distrust and aversion to his children.

Four days had now passed since Walter Constable had been at Denborough Park; and Julia, almost overwhelmed by their misfortunes, was agonised at his apparent indifference. She made excuses for him to herself; and yet, at the same time, she listened for his step, and started at every sound, in the fond hope that he was coming; and then, in the continually recurring disappointment, felt as if this doubt and suspense were more than she could bear. All this Bernard saw; and though neither spoke of it to the other, the pale and anxious countenance of his sister, of which he

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too well divined the cause, weighed as heavily on his soul as either their family grief or shame. Like all highly poetical but ill-regulated minds, he was irritable and suspicious; and once excited, the sympathy he felt for Julia became resentment against Walter. He recalled looks and expressions which, though not unobserved at the time, might yet have been entirely forgotten, had not events and suspicions brought them back, and given to them even deeper meaning; and he condemned Walter Constable, as less generous, as less unworldly than was the ideal standard of excellence by which he had so long measured him. "I have imagined him as I wished him to be, not as I might have known him to be," said Bernard: "I have partly imposed upon myself, and I have been bitterly punished!" Again he thought of sympathy and encouragement which he had received from him, and of the bright prospects that had been opened before him; and he felt hurled as it were from the sunny heights of confidence, of trusting friendship, and intellectual delight, into the dreary abysses of suspicion, deceived hopes, and the solitude of his own troubled spirit;—and dark indeed were those alternate seasons of depression!

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"I shall never believe in virtue or friendship again!" exclaimed Bernard indignantly, when, returning from the interment of his brother, he asked the desperate question, whether Walter Constable had been, and received from his sister the answer "No," spoken, spite of herself, reluctantly, as if she partook of her brother's suspicions. "I shall put no faith in fair promises again! And I thank Heaven that he will have to make no sacrifices for us! Had I sold myself into slavery for it, Mr. Constable should not have lost one sixpence by us!"

"Oh, Bernard, dearest Bernard," said Julia, "you make me miserable! you misjudge him. But supposing he were offended, has he not had enough to offend him ten times over?"

"What has passed between yourselves," replied Bernard with asperity, "I know not. But as to anything farther, I can only answer you by this question; had he been in your place, and you in his, could you have thus neglected him?"

Julia's heart, not her lips, made the direct reply. "Well, Bernard," she said, "leave the subject—I cannot contend with you; and if it were possible that he had deserted and forgotten

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me, you, I know, never will!" And so saying, she kissed his forehead tenderly, and hastened to her own chamber to think over the anxious subject with tears; while Bernard, yet more confirmed in his own opinion, and filled with yet hotter resentment against Walter, because of the anguish which Julia strove in vain to conceal, went forth into the solitudes of the old park, not to think, not to tranquillise his mind, but to see cause of irritation in everything that surrounded him—in twilight, in silence, and even in the fair round moon herself.

The next day was Sunday, and its calm bright evening brought to the soul of Walter Constable those heart-cementing, heart-softening influences which are as if the passing of an angel's wing overshadowed us, leaving behind some of its celestial essence of love. A golden light streamed in between the trees that formed the western side of the avenue, barring the turf with light and shadow; and, as if the blasting events of the last few days were forgotten, Walter gave himself up to the beauty of external things. He saw the rich and mellow light lie in broad masses alternated with intense shadow on the

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wooded slopes and hollows of Denborough Park; and to the right, just overtopping its dark trees, upon the very highest ground, the gilt vane of the old summer-house. All at once a renewed sense of Julia's goodness—her blameless suffering —her beauty — the natural joyousness of her heart, gloomed and saddened as it must now be— came upon him, and with self-condemnation which would have entirely reconciled Bernard to his friend, could he have known it, he vowed with himself to go even then to her, and receive all her full-hearted sorrows into his own breast. He leapt over every stile that came in his way with the alertness of a schoolboy and the impatience of a lover; "And of a truth," thought he, as he wondered at his own hilarity of heart and limb, "my soul is taking holiday!"

Denborough Park was in sight, but a reception awaited him for which he was not prepared.

"So, young man, what is your business?" asked the gruff voice of Sir Harbottle Grimstone, as Walter entered the park and came suddenly upon the baronet, who, in his old threadbare dress and walking-stick, furnished with a small

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spade at the end,—his invariable out-of-doors companion,—was stubbing up the thistles in all the energy of ill-humour, counting the while the prodigious costs of two funerals at once, with all the necessary mourning, though none would be wanted for Christopher and Robert, of which circumstance he by no means lost sight;—"So, sir, and you have yet to learn, at your time of life, a seemly behaviour and carriage on the Lord's Day! What urgent business are you upon, that you must needs come leaping and vaulting like a sky-rocket at this rate?"

"This is a goodly crop of thistles!" returned Walter sarcastically, meaning the remark to apply to the temper as well as to the field.

"Sir," said the baronet, understanding the allusion, "was it to affront me that you came jumping here like a mountebank?"

"By no means, Sir Harbottle."

"Then, sir, what is your business here at all?"

"I am not come for a brawl, Sir Harbottle," returned Walter, offended, and yet willing to keep peace; "my intentions were the most friendly in the world both to yourself and your family—my object was to see Miss Grimstone."

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"Oho! that was it, was it? Lookye, Mr. Constable, there go two words to every bargain. Has my leave been asked in this business?"

"You amaze me, Sir Harbottle!"

"Perhaps so," replied he coolly; "but I will put to you one simple question: To whom am I obliged for the death of one son, and for the d—d confounded trouble that the others are got into?"

"To yourself, Sir Harbottle,—to yourself, who neglected them in their youth to be disgraced by them in their manhood."

"It was myself who took them to Tutbury, eh?" ejaculated Sir Harbottle, almost breathless with passion: "it was myself, who, when that rascal was in safe keeping, thrust my neck into the noose on purpose that he should be at liberty to get into further mischief, eh?"

"Do you insinuate, Sir Harbottle, that I have been the cause of your sons' misdemeanours?"

"I not only insinuate it, but I speak it out plain!"

Provoked as Walter was by these insults, he remembered the money which he supposed Sir Harbottle had advanced to release him from his responsibility, and he in some degree excused his anger.

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"Come, come, Sir Harbottle," said he, "your feelings are excited—you are not in a fit state to speak of these things, and I cannot hear you reflect thus upon me in silence; therefore, if we must needs talk, let it be on subjects less personal, less exciting."

Sir Harbottle was pale with passion, and without noticing Walter's observation, he replied with the former charge: "I not only insinuate it, but I speak it out, sir; and I should like to know what the devil you must meddle in this matter for?"

"I wish to Heaven I had not meddled, Sir Harbottle!" said Walter, extremely provoked by this renewed accusation. "But I by no means wish to quarrel with you; therefore, I wish you a good evening, Sir Harbottle!"

"No, sir, I shall not let you off so easily," said the baronet. "You take extraordinary liberties, let me tell you, Mr. Constable: this, that, and the other you do, interfering in my affairs, without as much as 'By your leave;' and now, having got my sons out of the way, you think of marrying my daughter. You have an eye to the money, sir! But let me tell you, you are counting without your host!"

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"This is most extraordinary behaviour, Sir Harbottle!" said Walter, subjecting his passion by the most resolute self-command.

"Extraordinary behaviour! Heyday! the world is come to a pretty pass, when a man has not a voice in disposing of his own! My daughter, sir, is as much my own as this land is!"

"Let not Miss Grimstone's name come between us, Sir Harbottle; neither you nor I are cool at this moment; for God's sake, sir, do not make her a subject of strife between us!"

"I am perfectly cool—never was cooler in my life," replied Sir Harbottle; "and I shall say what I please, and be controlled by no man. I told you that you took great liberties, and now forsooth I am not to say anything but what it pleases you to hear! Egad! you are for making yourself master of Denborough Park with a vengeance!"

"Sir Harbottle," remonstrated Walter, "why should we work ourselves to this state of animosity? My addresses to Miss Grimstone cannot have been unknown to you!"

"Lookye now, Mr. Constable," returned he,

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"my daughter will some day have a pretty fortune if she marries to please me — a hundred thousand pounds, or something like it. But money must have money, sir. This old place at Westow, seventy acres of land, a tumble-down house, and not a spare hundred pounds to bless yourself with, will not do for me. I do not live here with my eyes shut, Mr. Constable; I know how things are going with you! You had better cut down your trees, and trade with the money,— an old avenue and a head full of family-pride will not do for me, sir; I shall never give my consent: that you may both of you understand, — and let her marry without it if she dare!"

"What, in Heaven's name, Sir Harbottle, is your motive for this strange behaviour?" asked Walter.

"Lord bless me! am I to explain myself down to the very dregs of actions and motives? I tell you, you shall not marry her!"

"Leave this subject, Sir Harbottle, or both you and I may say what we shall bitterly wish unsaid! My life, sir! I would not have borne from any other living man what I have this night borne from you!" said Walter with a flashing

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eye, and an excitement of tone which he vainly struggled to command.

"What I have to say, sir, I'll say now!" replied Sir Harbottle. "I know what you, with your miserable place at Westow, and your beggarly income, look after my daughter for. You think of being master here, sir!—you have got those lads out of the way, and that simpleton Bernard completely under your thumb, and now you think of settling yourself here!"

"I will hear no more, or I shall forget that you are on old man!" said Walter, turning away, with a low suppressed voice of the most tumultuous passion.

"Pay me the money you owe me!" exclaimed Sir Harbottle, "and come again to Denborough Park at your peril!"

Who can describe the tempest of passion that agitated the soul of Walter Constable! He had gone there with a heart overflowing with tenderness and affection, disinterested as the daylight itself; he had been insulted, taunted with his poverty, subjected to the most injurious accusations, and finally rejected. The indignant anger which had been suppressed at the time, boiled

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over when he found himself alone, and for many hours he remained in the fields in a state of mind bordering on frenzy. A burning sense of insult seemed to drive him on to some act of desperation; he despised himself for having tamely borne these insults—even Julia seemed an inadequate reward for the wounds his honour had received. It was a miserable time of passion; and when the paroxysm had gone by, he was terrified at his own excitement.

The next morning he rose from a night of broken slumber, with the firm determination to leave Westow as soon as possible, that he might lose in constant occupation the haunting sense of Sir Harbottle's insults, and the annoyances which must of necessity beset him while he remained in the neighbourhood of Denborough Park. All this excitement of mind did not escape the watchful eyes of Mrs. Constable, but with commendable forbearance she pressed for no explanation; and Walter, highly incensed as he was, resolved to keep Sir Harbottle's injurious behaviour strictly from her knowledge. She would not readily have pardoned his submission, nor would she ever after have extended sympathy or

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kindness to Julia, who more than ever, Walter was well persuaded, would need them both.

He intrusted a letter to Father Cradock, which he enjoined him to deliver to Julia, praying her to meet him at their old resort, the ruined summer-house, as soon as she could, and begging her to name the day and hour.

Unconscious of the unhappy encounter between her father and her lover, the day was still passing heavily and sorrowfully with Julia: she sat alone in their melancholy apartment, with the full sense of her stripped and desolate state upon her. "Oh!" thought she, "to live a life like this! so utterly forlorn day after day, month after month!" And then she thought how inexpressibly consoling would it be to pour out all these sorrows of her soul to Walter Constable. The very idea of his presence was like Heaven itself; what strength would not his sympathy give her! how would not the whole world's sorrow be as nothing if shared with him!—How different was the reality! Everything was shadowed over. Hope, sympathy, even companionship, was not. Her life-long friend, the most affectionate of mothers, was dead; Walter, the high-

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minded, generous, disinterested lover, the only honourable friend of her house, stood aloof; and Bernard himself was gloomy and ill at ease,—there was a bitterness and fierceness in his few brief expressions, from which she shrank as from the sting of a serpent. She dreaded to inquire why he was thus irritated, because he broke forth into such bitter invective against Walter. A presentiment, spite of herself, lay heavy upon her, that the intercourse with Walter was near its close, when Father Cradock delivered to her the letter.

The sight of his handwriting was an inexpressible relief; and Julia read the letter twice before she discovered that it was unsatisfactory. "Why did he write at all, — why did he not come as formerly; but why, especially, did he write a cool, constrained letter like this! Oh! it was so cruelly unlike her own feelings!" Julia meant her answer to be equally guarded; but, spite of the short-comings of his letter, hers, written with many tears, was full of kindness. As soon, she said, as the mournful rites had been performed for the dead, she would meet him at the appointed place. "May the dear Mother of Mercies

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bless you!" she concluded. "I write this with an aching heart, and a dread of yet coming sorrow which weighs on my spirit like a mountain of lead. There is but one voice which could assure me, and that I can never more hear! I think at times this is more than I can bear; but, oh! Walter, we know not what we can bear! Who could have persuaded me but a few days since, that I should have sat with tearless eyes by the dead body of my mother, and have been thankful even that she could not return to share the sorrow that overwhelms me! We know not, indeed, what we can bear, till some greater anguish than the last has tried us; and then we wo nder, as well we may, that our hearts are not broken!"

Walter read and re-read this letter, and even with tears vowed upon it to be true, eternally true to the heart that had dictated it.

Lady Grimstone was buried; and that same evening the corn was cleared from the field which she had so prophetically pointed out.

Julia had agreed to meet him at the summer-house on the following afternoon; and but one single hour before the appointed time, he received a letter from the Marquis of A——. He broke

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the seal with impatience, supposing it an immediate summons for himself and Bernard. What was his consternation, his agony, to read a letter of this import !—

"That the marquis had received from his friend and relative, the Earl of N——, information of a most unpleasant nature, relative to certain disgraceful occurrences which had taken place at Tutbury and in its neighbourhood, in which Mr. Walter Constable was implicated: that, for his part, he could not but imagine Mr. Constable able in some way to palliate his own share of the offence; but still, in consequence of even a suspicion being breathed on his character, he regretted extremely being unable to offer him the employment about which he had formerly written." The letter went on further to say, "that it certainly showed either very little moral honesty, or an uncommon audacity of purpose, to endeavour to introduce into the house of his noble friend, and as a companion to his nephew Mr. Finch, a character so notoriously abandoned as Mr. Grimstone was, and one, at the same time, who had designs upon his noble friend's ward Miss Hammond. That he might have supposed Mr. Constable ignorant

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of his character, or imposed upon by him, though that would not have argued much for Mr. Constable's sagacity; but the fact of his accompanying him to Tutbury, and obtaining his liberation after the first offence, unquestionably implicated him in the guilt, and convinced him, however reluctant he might otherwise have been to believe him guilty of so imprudent an imposition, that his noble friend was right in the severe judgment he had passed upon him;" and in conclusion, "as one who had some experience of the world, he advised him to let his associates for the future be few, and those few choice."

Walter felt as if he had received a stunning blow as he read this terrible letter. The whole mystery was at once clear before him. The Earl of N— was the friendly patron of Bernard Grimstone, and Christopher was supposed to be he. Well might the resentment of all be kindled against him! Walter could not bear to think of the implication.

"What a base hardihood of purpose am I accused of!" exclaimed he; "and yet the thing is plausible!" And in the very recklessness of desperation, he threw the letter before his mother:

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"There is an end of all my hopes! I am a blasted, ruined man!" he exclaimed; "and all for the sake of those accursed profligates!"

He ground his teeth in rage, folded his arms, and walked with hurried steps across and across the apartment, feeling the while as if the compass of the room was too narrow for his excitement—as if the walls pressed upon him.

Mrs. Constable, who had laid down her knitting at the first glance of her son's countenance as he read the letter, took it up and read it also.

"Walter," said she, "you must hasten to the marquis and clear yourself: this imputation must not rest against you,—the name of Walter Constable must be unstained."

"It shall be done instantly; I will be off this evening!" And immediately preparations were made for his journey; and in the agitation and occupation of the time, the appointed hour when Julia was to meet him went by.

Julia had reached the place at the appointed moment. The summer-house met her like an old friend; her very heart warmed towards the old bleached door, with its wide, gaping joints and broken mouldings.

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"What a dear place it is!" thought she; "what happy hours too have I spent in it!" And then she ran over in memory many a time of especial delight, of heart-union and communion, that stood pre-eminently happy among all the happy memories of the place. But this triumphant state of mind gradually subsided, and then she began to wonder he was not there—to look out for him, to wish he would come, and in the end to think it was but like the other strange parts of his later conduct; what could it mean? And then it seemed, by the impatient reckoning of her heart, as if she had waited there for hours. She looked out again towards Westow: she could see the house through an opening in the plantation at a few yards' distance from the summer-house. There it stood, with its character of old family stateliness about it — its arched gateway — its magnificent avenue,—its tower-like porch, its large chimneys: the very chamber which she knew to be Walter's, she could see with its open casement—nay, she could see the very dog, a remarkably white hound, which lay sleeping under the parlour-window, upon the sunny flower-border. Walter of a certainty was not on his way, or the dog

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would not be lying there. Her pride was touched by this apparent slight and neglect, and she returned to the summer-house, questioning with herself whether it beseemed her maidenly dignity to wait any longer for a lover who appeared so regardless of her; but before she had answered herself, a step approached — it was Bernard. The sight of him recalled her fealty to Walter—at least so far that she would have been extremely unwilling for Bernard to know how aggrieved she felt at that very moment.

"Have you waited thus long, and he is not come?" asked he with an acrimonious tone.

"For whom do you mean?" said she with some confusion: "I am waiting here for my own pleasure."

"Fie, Julia!" said he, "you cannot impose upon me thus; you are waiting for Mr. Constable. I watched you come here an hour ago."

"You cannot have been studying very deeply," she remarked, looking significantly at the book between the pages of which he still kept one finger,—"you cannot have found your volume interesting, Bernard, if you have had an hour to spend in watching me!"

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"I know," continued Bernard, in his low but earnest voice, and without noticing her interruption, "that Mr. Constable wishes this connexion at an end! I know it well, Julia—I have seen it long—I had reason enough to know it months ago, but I was so blind I would not see."

"You are unjust," said she; "you are so suspicious—you are as you used to be before we knew Walter; and why will you distress me thus?"

"He is ashamed of us, Julia! It is his honour, not his inclination, which yet binds him to you," replied Bernard, "if he still considers himself bound—but you see how his engagement is kept."

"It is not kind of you, Bernard," said Julia, with emotion: "why do you thus pry on our intercourse—why do you thus wish to deprive me of the only consolation I have left? You are unjust to Mr. Constable, and you would make me so too: besides, what business have you to suppose me here with any expectation of seeing him at all?"

"You may deceive yourself, dear sister," said Bernard with emotion equal to her own, "but

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you shall not deceive me; and as to your intercourse with him—Heaven knows, I wish to pry into no secrets, nor to deprive you of consolation; but have a strong heart, a proud womanly heart, dear Julia, and do not let *him* give up this connexion: it will be easier for you to give him up by your own act than for you to find him faithless. How could you bear that?"

"I shall never have to bear that!" said she, persisting against the anxieties of her own heart. "I know him better than you do, Bernard—I know that he is too noble to desert me for the faults of others; and so long as he willingly continues our love, I will never give it up! Why should I, Bernard? I could bear rather to die than to find him unworthy!" And the tears that Julia had restrained so long flowed freely.

Bernard looked on her with pity mingled with reproach.

"It is not kind in you, brother," continued she, no longer repressing her feelings, "to seek to deprive me of the only poor consolation I have in this world! What could you give me instead?

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at what price would you buy from me the affection of Walter Constable?"

"Heaven knows," replied Bernard with bitterness, "that we are poor enough in friendship and the world's esteem; but I can promise you peace of mind and self-esteem!"

"Do you, Bernard, enjoy them yourself?" asked Julia, fixing her dark and beautiful eyes upon him. "No, dearest Bernard," said she, "leave me as I am. In a little while I shall be yet more forlorn; you will be gone, and Walter; and my only consolation will be the memory of your love, and your mutual friendship for each other! Let us not, dear brother, wantonly throw away from us those friends we have: my happiness can only be insured by Walter's truth, which I will not doubt, and by your restored friendship."

"Julia," said Bernard solemnly, "listen to my determination. I will receive no favour from the hands of Walter Constable. What he does for us now is done grudgingly; he wishes the alliance broken — it is broken on my part. Had he been the firm friend you take him for, would he have neglected us thus long in our sorest

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heart-needs—would he have kept you waiting thus long at this your first meeting after all that has passed? No, Julia, my resolve is taken,—I will have no favour at his hands! Thank God, that money is paid; we owe him no debt, and we will receive no favour!"

"Oh, Bernard, Bernard, you will break my heart!" exclaimed Julia; "you are ungenerous—you are so suspicious, so proud! You deceive yourself. This, you think, is manly independence. It is pride, it is pique—it is even more unworthy than what you charge Walter Constable with; he at least has had reason for offence, if offence there be—you have had none!"

Bernard looked at her in silent astonishment. "I will wait for you," at length he said, "below the wood: you must learn the truth more bitterly than I had wished! When you are tired of waiting, you can join me." And so saying, he went out; and Julia, depressed beyond expression, leaned her head on the window-sill and wept bitterly.

"Miss Grimstone!" said a voice, a few moments afterwards, which roused her like an electric shock. Julia lifted up her tearful eyes, and notwithstanding the coldness of the address, looked

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joyfully up into her lover's face. Her mourning-dress, her sorrowful countenance, the angelic purity and tenderness of her eyes, touched his heart with the deepest love.

"I have not deserved all this goodness," exclaimed Walter; "I have kept you waiting, and even now my time is but short."

"The time is always short with you," replied she; "all the long summer days that we spent here, how short they seemed!"

"You are an angel to forgive me thus; but I must clear myself."

"It is enough—it is enough," said Julia, "to have you here—to know that you are the same kind friend as ever—to know that we shall again meet as hitherto!"

"Julia," said Walter, letting go the hand he was holding, and recalled by her words to what he had especially appointed that meeting to say, "you know that we meet in disobedience to your father's commands; that in loving me—in meeting me here, you are guilty of disobedience to him; that our meeting—our intercourse, for the future must be clandestine?"

Julia felt as if her heart had suddenly become

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stone, and pale and almost lifeless she heard these strange words, spoken in that cold severe tone, which Walter unconsciously assumed in the very recollection of Sir Harbottle's insults.

"Do you know this?" asked Walter again, while his heart bled for her.

"No," returned Julia, summoning an extreme force of mind, "I know it not, nor can I understand what you mean."

"I ask you, Julia, are you prepared to continue our intercourse in opposition to your father's commands?"

"I cannot understand you: what has my father to do with this now?" asked she in a tone of heart-agony.

Walter then related what had passed between Sir Harbottle and himself—concealing, however, all but what immediately applied to this attachment, that he might wound her feelings as little as possible.

"It is for you, Julia, to decide the steps I shall take," said he. "If you can love me on these terms—if you can continue our intimacy with these restrictions, and their consequence of Sir Harbottle's inveterate opposition—my heart

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is still yours, and my hand too, whenever fortune shall enable me to make you mine."

This was perhaps as much as Julia could have expected her lover to say; but still it wanted something—it came far short of the energy of her own affection, which would have laid down life for his sake—it seemed cold, and Julia bethought herself of her brother's words.

"Mr. Constable," she replied, "I would rather have died than you should have been thus insulted, and that you must know: besides, my father's character and temper were not strangers to you when our acquaintance commenced. I could only have been chosen by you as disconnected with my family. I am as guiltless of this great wrong which has been done you, as of all the other offences, and they are manifold, which you have received at their hands; and Heaven knows, not one of them but has wounded me deeply! But Mr. Constable, Bernard said," continued she, still deathly pale and with tearless eyes, "that you were changed — that your absence from Denborough Park was occasioned by disgust for our family — that your connexion with me was continued from a sense of honour,

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not of inclination. Oh, Walter, these are cruel things to surmise only!—to know them of a truth, is the saddest, the heaviest of all my misfortunes!" And, spite of herself, her voice faltered, and the tears filled her eyes, though not one fell.

"Bernard was partly right, dear Miss Grimstone," returned Walter; "but he did me grievous wrong as to my affection for you: never was I more devotedly attached to you than since these unhappy events have occurred. The very circumstance of my offering to continue the connexion, after what has passed between Sir Harbottle and myself, may assure you of my devotion. I am not a man, Julia, lightly to bear an insult; and yet ——"

"—And yet, Mr. Constable, you would say," interrupted she, "though you have been thus injuriously treated by my father, if I desire it, you consider yourself in honour bound to me. I release you on these terms!"

"No, Julia, you have misinterpreted my meaning. I would have said—and yet I cannot resign you without the most painful struggle—your love is dear to me as life itself!" replied

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Walter, with an earnestness and truthfulness that Julia could not resist.

"Thank God that you have said so! But, oh, Walter, I have sometimes questioned with myself whether I ought not voluntarily to release you from your engagement to me—perhaps I ought—this connexion has already cost you so much," conceded she in the generosity of her overflowing heart.

"No, dearest Julia," he replied; "not from considerations of my worldly interests must this connexion be given up—not unless your duty to Sir Harbottle demands it."

"God forgive me if it be sin!" returned she; "but my blessed mother sanctioned it. Oh, Walter, have you forgotten her words?"

"No, no, my own Julia, I have not forgotten them; and sacred as is the memory of the dead shall be the promise I then made her! And now, come what will of further trial, sorrow, or disappointment, they shall not sunder us!"

A long embrace sealed these words, and for those few happy moments all anxiety—all care—all sorrow were forgotten.

"And now, my Julia," said Walter, "this our

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blessed meeting is but, in fact, our parting: I must leave Westow this very night."

"And Bernard, must he go with you?"

"No," replied Walter; "I must go alone."

Julia, spite of the reassurance of his good faith, started at these words. "And you disconnect yourself from Bernard?" asked she. "Oh, Walter, this is hardly kind — hardly generous. Bernard is as guiltless as myself."

"Do not question me, nor judge me," replied Walter, not willing to disclose to her the nature of the marquis's letter. "Some little difficulty — some little impediment has occurred which I hope to remove: in the mean time hope for the best—yet be not surprised even by utter failure and disappointment."

"What does this mean?—has it not reference in some way to my family?" asked Julia.

"Do not pry into it, dearest girl—do not drag new troubles into being before their time," said he: "I shall return yet again to Westow after my interview with the marquis."

Julia saw a gloom settle on Walter's brow, and she again remembered the words of her brother. "Oh, do not let me think you repent our ac-

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quaintance — do not speak the words which I tremble to hear from your lips !"

" No, Julia !" said he solemnly, " I shall say nothing at this our parting which you shall wish unsaid ; I will carry with me the remembrance that your heart has received no sorrow from me. And yet, dearest Julia, of the particulars of my present journey I cannot now speak ; do not seek to pry into them : but be assured of this— that my soul is faithfully and devotedly yours,— that the love we plighted in our happier days shall not be shaken by adversity, nor influenced by opposition. Brighter days will come, never fear ! and my energies both of mind and body shall be employed in enabling me to return and claim you for my own !"

" Now the Eternal Father of Love bless and prosper you !" said she with an energy of affection she could not conceal. " I will inquire into nothing—I desire to know nothing beyond the assurance of your continued faith. Oh, dearest Walter, pardon me if doubts—dark and cruel doubts and despondings, have crossed my mind, and made even gloomier the gloomy path of my life. But it is enough to know that you are

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faithful! I am satisfied—I am more than satisfied for myself; and I trust to the goodness of your nature not to forsake poor Bernard—not to think hardly of him."

"Of *him!*" replied Walter, "oh no; for if there be a high-minded, pure, and noble creature on the earth, it is your brother Bernard."

Julia was reassured. And so talked they; and hours passed on in that close and endearing communion of heart and soul, which, though it may be mingled with sighs and tears, serves yet for the heart to live upon, and take hope from through years of sorrow and separation. The hours slid on imperceptibly; many a parting was essayed and many an embrace taken, and then the gathering twilight recalled to Julia's remembrance that her lover had his journey to commence. Walter accompanied her through the wood; and then Bernard presenting himself at a short distance, one more embrace sealed their parting, and each went their separate way.

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CHAPTER XII.

WALTER's interview with his patron was extremely unsatisfactory. He found the earl just gone, and the marquis filled with prejudice. It was in vain that Walter explained,—he was coldly believed; and after all was done, the marquis declared he could not comprehend how there should be two Grimstones of characters so opposite, for both of whom Mr. Constable showed so much zeal. He could not understand, besides, how one of the Grimstones, who, it seems, had designs upon Miss Hammond, supposing it were not the guilty young man himself, should be introduced into the most private connexion with his noble friend's family, where he would have daily opportunities of seeing the lady;—unless it had been with design—"base design," said the marquis, exciting himself to passion; "for these accidental coincidences do not occur in real life, whatever they may do in books, Mr. Constable."

Walter started up, declaring it was useless to urge anything further to one who had prejudged the case. He asserted again that he was entirely

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blameless —was falsely accused; and though he deeply deplored that any event should have cost him the favour of the noble marquis; from what he had seen, he was convinced not even justice was to be expected at his hands!

This was not the spirit to conciliate the proud noble. The marquis, nevertheless, condescended to say, "if Mr. Walter Constable succeeded in clearing himself, and could assure him that all connexion with this family was at an end, perhaps, at some future time, he might be able to serve him." Walter thanked the conceding patron, but begged he would trouble himself no further on his account, as he was by no means at liberty to bind himself, nor could he wait for contingencies.

The breach was irreparable; and Walter left the house with the feelings of one who has been playing for desperate stakes, and knows not yet what may be the extent of his loss.

Instead of returning to Westow, he pursued his journey to London, and thence to St. Omer's, where his firmest friends were. He remained there several weeks; and as if ill-fortune had set in against him, it was not long before he

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heard from his London friends that an implication of his character, greatly to his disadvantage, was abroad; and, at the same time, that the breach with the marquis, and his abruptly leaving England, gave sanction to it. Walter's pride was deeply touched, and in the irritation of the moment he embraced an offer which was made him in Germany, and engaged to remove shortly to Vienna. This done, he again returned to London with the determination of clearing his character; which he happily succeeded in doing.

All this necessarily occupied many weeks,—it was the middle of October when he returned to Westow. In the mean time the two Grimstones had left their hiding-place at Tutbury, and taken refuge at the old house at Knighton, Sir Harbottle's former residence, which had been now unoccupied for many months. They had not enjoyed their retreat long before their father himself discovered them. The exact particulars of their rencontre are not known; but rumour said that Sir Harbottle actually meditated delivering them up to justice, in order to secure to himself the reward offered for their apprehension; but this we cannot vouch for. Their meeting, however, was one of anger on the part of Sir Harbot-

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tle, the effects of which were felt by every member of his family at Denborough Park. The two young men were taken at Knighton, at the very moment they were jovially carousing over a tankard of ale and a mutton-chop,—which they had obtained and cooked, nobody knew how,—and were lodged in the county gaol.

Julia experienced her father's anger in his threat of disinheritance if she encouraged the addresses of Mr. Constable; and Bernard, in an unceasing attack of reproof and insulting taunt, for his want of spirit, his love of books,—his idle, dreaming life, which had not even the pretence of manly sport about it, as it must be allowed Christopher's life always had, whatever else there might be bad about him.

Bernard had of late become even more gloomy and self-occupied than before. He no longer made his sister the confidant of his thoughts and feelings, though his manner was kind and full of consideration towards her; nor had he any intercourse, either of a studious or spiritual nature with Father Cradock. And these incessant, invidious reproaches were a new cause of suffering and irritation to his morbid spirit, and chafed it beyond endurance. Packing up,

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therefore, a few favourite books, with a change of linen, and pocketing the amount of his finances (but a few shillings), he took his fishing-rod in his hand, and, on the plea of a fishing excursion, left his home, scarcely taking leave even of his sister.

Nothing could be more melancholy than the situation of Julia. Walter did not write; Bernard was gone, she knew not where, nor for how long; Mrs. Constable evidently shunned her. There was no one to sympathise with her—no one to whom she could even hint of her peculiar unhappiness, excepting Father Cradock; and to her the good old man devoted himself with the zeal of a lover. Most touching were his endeavours to divert her: he would bring her a flower from his walks, or go a day's journey to borrow her a book, or to fetch her a piece of music which he thought would give her pleasure; he even established himself amid the discomforts of Denborough Park, that he might be constantly at hand to enliven or solace her. Julia felt all these delicate attentions, this devotedness of friendship, to the very core of her heart. She kept her tears for her own chamber, her miserable reflections for her own bosom;

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and expended her smiles and her forced cheerfulness upon the kind old man till he half persuaded himself that she was happy.

Walter Constable returned to Westow; and his mother, after the first joyful emotions of meeting were over, and after the anxious concern was expressed which his care or travel-worn countenance gave rise to, laid before him Sir Harbottle's demand in legal form for the repayment of the money he was indebted to him.

"How is this," asked she, "that you have borrowed money from Sir Harbottle Grimstone?"

Walter explained. It was money which could be instantly repaid, as nearly the entire sum remained in Bernard's hands.

The lovers met again in the ruined summer-house. The cheerfulness of the summer was gone; there had come that change over everything, both of earth and sky, which is beautiful or sad according to the tone of mind of the beholder. The leaves were tinted brown, red, and yellow; many had already fallen, and lay matted and damp underfoot from the effects of several days' rain: others were scattered by the autumnal wind, which went sobbing and wailing at intervals

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through the branches, over the broken roof, and among the loose casement-panes.

"How melancholy it is!" said Julia, after she had listened to it some time in silence. "At first, when I entered and found you here, I thought everything was delightful, and that wind seemed to me like cheerful music: now it is sadder than an Eolian harp!—you know not how utterly it depresses me!"

Walter talked cheeringly of everything; his spirits were even gay, and under their influence Julia's heart rose again.

"But," said he, when they were about parting, he having first recollected the subject at that moment, "Sir Harbottle demands the money which was advanced for Bernard. Poor fellow! How unfortunate we have been! I am more grieved for Bernard than for myself even! Disappointment cuts him up so completely!"

"Oh, Walter," said Julia, who saw a new trouble before them, "you know we have not the money!"

"How so?" asked he; "it was put into the hands of Bernard at the time: he has it, there is no doubt."

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Julia then told how it had been applied. Walter was amazed. "Surely," said he, "that money was advanced by Sir Harbottle Grimstone!"

Julia explained still further, and told him, with tears, of the sacred deposit which had gone with it.

"And for this," exclaimed Walter with generous enthusiasm, "you had no thanks! I might have known that such prompt consideration could only come from you!" And, filled with admiration of her and her brother, and the noble sacrifice they had made, he disregarded for the time the demand that it flung back upon himself.

The lovers parted—each carrying away increased affection, and that deep joy of spirit which a pure and ardent attachment alone can give, and against which misfortune itself has no power;—nay, like the carbuncle in the midst of darkness, which shines out clearest and brightest when fortune seems set in array against it.

In the sobriety of after-reflection Walter took a survey of this affair. Bernard had sacrificed what, in the prospect which he thus had, of honourable employment, might be considered his own money, although Walter was surety for it.

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That money he had now to refund; in fact, he was but again finding the consequences of making himself responsible for Christopher Grimstone—deeply indeed was he punished for that act! As to remonstrating with Sir Harbottle himself, that was not to be thought of; he had put himself in this difficult position, and he must abide by it. The question was, how the money was to be raised;—a difficult question indeed for Walter to answer! Small as the sum was, he knew not where to borrow it; for, being a Catholic, though of an old respectable family, surrounded only by Protestant gentry, at a time too when these religious differences made wider separation than they do at present; and having himself lived so much abroad, while his mother led the life almost of a recluse, he had no intimate friends among his neighbours, therefore he could not borrow. He was thrown upon his own resources, and, Heaven knows, they were small enough! Sir Harbottle had said truly that he was poor. His mother had already made immense sacrifices for him. He could not possibly ask her to do more, and especially not ask her to advance money for this Grimstone connexion; and what-

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ever money he had the power of raising, he himself would need for his present means of support. Walter cursed his own folly in being surety for any man, as many another has done before him; and vowed to make it a lesson for life; and then set himself to consider what he could turn into money. Farming-stock he had none—the land was all let, and thence came part of his mother's income,—field-timber there was none, for it had already been cut down to bear in part the charges of his education. There was not even a gravel-pit or a stone-quarry at Westow—these good things were in Sir Harbottle's lands: nothing remained but the avenue, and of those sacred inviolate trees not one had been touched for their own needs. Walter thrust the idea away as if it were sinful—it would be like cutting up the old family tree itself.

The next day he walked in the avenue admiring the goodly array of trees; three hundred and sixty-five sufficient witnesses to the stateliness of his house—the supporters of the family arms were certainly less respectable than these. "And suppose," thought Walter, "it were possible to sacrifice a sufficient number of these trees,

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which of them must go?" They were all so much alike—not one had outgrown its fellows, not one had decayed—it would be impossible to select. "The trees must stand!" was therefore his concluding remark.

The third day the same idea beset him, and he thought of the man who was haunted with the idea of murder till he actually committed it. Wherever he went, the thought of felling the trees went with him; he looked from his window, he saw only the avenue: and two gentlemen, two of his foreign friends, calling upon him, began immediately to extol the wonderful beauty of the avenue, the grand cathedral-like vista, the extraordinarily fine effect of light within it; and Mrs. Constable, who, good lady, never missed an opportunity of relating its history, gave it at full, adding, that "the loss of any of those trees would be to her like the death of a dear friend."

Walter felt strangely disturbed; and no sooner were his guests gone, than, as if by some irresistible impulse, he began to calculate aloud the value of the trees; exclaiming against the necessity of felling any of them.

"Walter," said his mother, "are you dreaming?"

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"I am only too much awake!" was his reply; "yet how is this money to be raised but by felling some of this timber?"

Mrs. Constable had yet to be shown the necessity there was for her son's repaying the money; she laid down her knitting before he had finished—a certain sign how deeply she was affected.

"Walter," said she, "Sir Harbottle Grimstone received the greater part of his property, the whole of the Denborough Park property, as a curse,—a curse upon him, his heirs, and whoever connected themselves with them. You see how it works. Sorely against my will has this connexion been from the first!"

"Curses cannot come by inheritance," replied Walter: "this is an idle superstition!"

"The very means," returned his mother, "which Sir Harbottle has taken to nullify this curse, has made it operate only the more deeply. This connexion will be your ruin,—you see it has already brought you nothing but confusion! Your character is tarnished,—you have lost the favour of your noblest friends,—you have banished yourself from England; and now, you will

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tear up by the roots our old family honours, all for the sake of these Grimstones! Walter, this is cruel! Take everything I have, leave me but one change of raiment—take away my very income itself, but leave the avenue untouched; at all events, let me be dead before you put axe to the root of any one of those trees!"

"Dearest mother," replied Walter, who felt most acutely every word she had said, "I grant you I have done a marvellously unwise thing to make myself liable to this payment; but having done so, I must submit."

"Submit!" repeated his mother with an emphasis of extraordinary scorn; "and what business has a Grimstone to ask any sacrifice from us! Good Heavens! we are poor enough, and have difficulties enough to encounter, without sacrificing ourselves and involving ourselves for *them!*"

Notwithstanding the conversations he had with his mother, a specimen of which we have given above, Walter tried to reconcile himself to the idea—to persuade himself that the family honours were independent of these trees; that with his uncertain prospects, narrow finances, and already encumbered estate, it would be far wiser to cut

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down the whole avenue, than to add even the small sum of three hundred pounds to the present encumbrances which weighed so heavily upon his mother. But it would not do,—this rhetoric of reason was weak against sentiment, family pride, and old attachments. What would Westow be with a broken avenue! The family glory was, that the trees had stood from the days of their great ancestor, just as he had planted them,—not one had perished. Walter's boyish memories, too, were all connected with them. His only distinct recollection of his father—the tall, stately man, who in middle life had silver hair—was of his walking up and down this avenue of a summer's evening, with himself—his latest-born and only living child, by the hand; and of his relating the family history over and over again, of the stout-hearted John Constable and the thirty years' war; and of the fair Lady Blanche of such wondrous beauty, whose sad history made both man and child weep. And with these retracings of gone days, came back many a thing else forgotten:—the violets which grew by thousands among the swelling roots of some particular trees, and which he was sent out to gather for his

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mother every day throughout the season. He remembered the very birds which, in the undisturbed quietness of Westow, were so wonderfully tame, that they hopped about, they and their broods, picking the seeds of the dry summer-grass within the avenue, and filling his boyish heart with intense delight. Walter was living over again those former years in perfect forgetfulness of the present, one day shortly after the conversation we have given above, when Mrs. Constable, again putting down her knitting, began—

"I would say nothing about it, Walter, if the money had been laid out for any advantage to yourself, or for any imagined advantage; but that you should have been duped out of it for that profligate, and in the end for it to serve worse than no purpose — to enable him to get into yet deeper disgrace, and in fact to ruin you, does, I must confess, provoke me! But, however, that was not what I meant to say: it never was in my nature to put my own personal convenience in comparison with your advantage, and especially, Walter, could I not do it at the expense of your good name!"

"You have been a noble, a most self-for-

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getting mother," replied Walter emphatically: "would to God I saw the means of raising this miserable sum without distressing you!"

"Walter," said she solemnly, "the trees must not be cut down. In the eyes of your former noble friends you are a dishonoured man,—to cut them down now would be to chronicle your disgrace!"

"I have been deeply unfortunate," said Walter.

"Yes, my dear son," she continued, "you have been so; but keep a heart above misfortune, and all may yet be well. What your mother can do to help you shall be done!"

"No," replied Walter, "you shall make no further sacrifice for me!"

"Walter," said she, "it is a parent's duty to sacrifice every personal consideration to their children, provided those children be worthy." Walter was about to speak. "Listen," she said, "and do not interrupt me. There is a religious house near Bruges, where I spent some happy months of my maiden life,—thither I will go; a small sum will suffice for me there. I will leave Westow for two years, and my in-

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come for that time shall be mortgaged. You will thus not only have the ready cash to cover this demand, but something wherewith to commence your career handsomely. I thank Heaven that I have thought of this plan!"

Walter was unable to reply; he knew what this sacrifice must have cost her. To leave Westow at any time, even for a few days, had always been a great trial. She had not even thought of living abroad, to be near him, formerly; and now, to relieve him from difficulties into which the Grimstones had brought him, she volunteered so much!

Nevertheless, he saw the feasibility of the scheme, though he had never thought of it,—he could not. None but a noble-hearted, generous mother like his could have thought of it; and his heart overflowed with gratitude. He did not even oppose the scheme, but he made her feel how deeply sensible he was of her goodness.

"Well, thank God!" said she, "that this is decided!" I have not slept, Walter, since you talked of felling the trees! I believe it would have killed me! And now, though the thought of leaving this dear place at another time

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would have been terrible, I am reconciled. I shall return to Westow, and find all its unshorn honours yet about it!"

No sooner was it decided than it was done. The money was advanced by a London money-dealer, who was empowered to receive the income for the next two years. Mrs. Constable dismissed her few domestics, retaining only one ancient woman of undoubted fidelity, to whom the house was confided, with free permission to Father Cradock to be there whenever he pleased. So great an event as this, the voluntary absence of Mrs. Constable, had not happened at Westow since the death of its master; and unbounded was the amazement of every one to whom her habits and character were known, when the rumour got abroad. It was one of the world's wonders of nine days.

Sir Harbottle received his money; and Father Cradock, who was commissioned with the payment, took the opportunity of remonstrating with him on the singular hardness of his nature, on his avarice, his unfatherly conduct to his children; and Sir Harbottle, applying it all to this repayment, dwelt in answer, like Shylock, upon the strength of his bond. But the good priest un-

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deceived him, and set a long array of sins before him. Sir Harbottle heard him without interruption, smiled, and bade him go on. Father Cradock did so, and pleaded for the lovers. The old house at Knighton, he said, was standing vacant at that very time; and that it would be a joy which angels themselves might envy him, to endow them richly, and give them Knighton for their home. The old man was eloquent, and spoke feelingly of domestic life, and of the beauty and the endearments of children. Strange was it, that he who could have neither wife nor child, could yet speak so well! It was a beautiful picture that he drew, giving the grandfather a place in it;—he wept himself as he spoke: but he had reason presently to wish he had held his peace. The answer which Sir Harbottle made was one of concentrated rage; imprecations and threats against his daughter if she ventured to marry thus in opposition to his will, and threats against the old man if he dared to advocate such a step with her.

Father Cradock withdrew, absolutely putting his fingers to his ears, that his soul might not be afflicted with the impieties of the angry man.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE evening had arrived before the day of departure. The house at Westow already looked deserted; the household was dismissed, the shutters of many windows were closed; and Mrs. Constable was in readiness for her journey.

The lovers were met to part in the ruined summer-house; and Julia, conscious that on these passing moments she must live through dreary and melancholy years, stood overwhelmed with grief, her cheek resting on Walter's shoulder, when Bernard, dusty with travel, with a pale and agitated countenance, suddenly entered. Julia, delighted to see him, flew to meet him: he returned her welcome with the utmost affection.

"Mr. Constable," said he, offering his hand to Walter, "I have done you great wrong—from my soul I beg your pardon! I believed you less noble than you have proved yourself!"

Walter grasped the offered hand with friendly warmth, and Julia wept to see this unlooked-for reunion.

"I have heard what you have done for us,"

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said Bernard: "I have come past Westow even now. It must not be, Constable, — my father cannot submit to it! My God! what a dishonour it is to us that your household must thus be broken up for this paltry sum, and all the money that lies unappropriated at Denborough Park the while! It must not be, Constable—it shall not be! I will go to my father myself." And Bernard turned instantly to go out.

"No, dearest brother," said Julia, stopping him; "it is vain—it is worse even than vain!"

Walter too joined his entreaties that he would let things remain as they were. He even made light of what had happened, and spoke as if his mother herself preferred the journey.

"All this matters nothing," replied Bernard; "the dishonour still remains the same to us—to me it will remain like the sting of the serpent!"

"Bernard," said Walter, after he had prevailed upon him to abate somewhat the vehemence of his feelings, and Julia had informed him of the failure of Father Cradock's interference, — "Bernard," said he, "follow me to St. Omer's: I have firm friends there; I will insure you no disappointment among them—there you will find

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the most intellectual, the most noble-hearted men. Your blessed mother herself would have advocated this step; you must not forget your holy destination."

"Yes, dearest Bernard," exclaimed Julia, reconciled to parting with her brother in the prospect of their restored friendship,—"Yes, dearest Bernard, go! I can bear all things if I know you are happy. There you will have books—there you will have quiet—there you will have peace of mind!"

Bernard struck his open palm upon his forehead, and stood in agonized silence. "No," replied he at length, "this cannot be! Heaven knows, from the depths of my soul, how I bless you for your great kindness; but this cannot be, —I am not a Catholic! I see your horror—you regard me now as a renegade from God! Do not misjudge me: my mind has striven with conviction till it can withstand it no longer— I am a Protestant! Let not this, however, make strife between us; our paths through time may be different—we shall meet at the same point in eternity."

"Oh, brother!" exclaimed Julia, her hands

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clasped and her countenance pale as death, "this is the grief I least of all looked for!" And unable to restrain her feelings, she burst into tears.

Walter too, who, like Julia, was a religious Catholic, heard the avowal with the most unqualified sorrow and regret.

It was an evening of bitter grief—grief for parting, grief over the beloved apostate; while his feelings were of such intense suffering as would be impossible to describe.

The Constables, mother and son, were gone; and Julia had received her first letter, sent to the care of Father Cradock at Westow, written from Bruges;—a letter consolatory from its spirit of affection, and comfortable from the hope it held out for the future.

Christopher and George Grimstone were convicted of the offence charged against them, and were sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the county gaol, and to find, on their liberation, sureties in heavy recognisances for the preservation of the peace. It was well for Julia that the entire seclusion of her life at Denborough Park kept her from the personal sense of the ignominy

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that hung over her family. She knew, indeed, of its existence; but she was spared in great measure the humiliation of being made to feel it.

The intercourse between Julia and Bernard in the mean time was of the tenderest kind; though the subject of religious opinion, at first warmly entered upon, was soon entirely abandoned, from the jealous solicitude which she felt lest it should produce any breach or coldness between them. Julia gave him up to what she considered the better skill and experience of Father Cradock, who, she fondly hoped, would bring him back to his old allegiance; but Bernard was too honest to let the good Father expect a proselyte, and too deeply convinced of the faith he had adopted to be readily shaken. Father Cradock cared not to tell Julia the result of their conferences.

In appearance Bernard was wonderfully changed. The quick, restless eye, the flushing cheek, the timid and almost bashful manner, were gone, and had given place to the most grave, earnest, and decided manner and cast of countenance; he seemed to have grown at once from the visionary youth to the man whose life is de-

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voted to momentous purposes. Julia wondered as she looked upon him, wishing earnestly that she could have known the whole secret of his spirit. She could hardly believe, at times, that this could be the gentle, doubting being whose mind might have been fittest emblemed by an April day, and whose hand had shaken like an aspen-leaf as he had presented to her the song or sonnet he had been too sensitive to read aloud to her. In truth, however, his spirit was the same as ever,—equally sensitive, equally irregular,—now elated, now depressed; but principle and moral feeling had been developed, which gave an aim and character to his mind; and a necessity was now upon him which called forth energies both of mind and body, and, like any other stimulus, raised him for the time above weakness or sense of inability. What this necessity was, we will make known to our readers.

"Have you no sonnet, or sweet little song, dear Bernard?" said Julia, one dull morning in November, as they sat together in their room; "it is so long now since you read me anything. Oh, Bernard, those were blessed times when you wrote something new every day: do you not

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remember them ? All was flowery and sunshiny then—my heart has grown old since those times ; there is no poetry now—all is dull prose."

" I cannot write now, Julia," said he ; " I shall never write poetry as long as that old house at Westow stands desolate. A blight, a desolation has come over my spirit. Oh, you know not the agony it is to me to see those smokeless chimneys—those closed windows !"

" Alas !" said Julia ; " but is it in our power to alter these things ?"

" I have a vow with myself," replied Bernard, " to see justice done to those noble beings ! Why should they suffer for the guilt — the absolute dishonesty of our house ! I am crushed as with the weight of a mountain when I think of this great wrong that is done them !"

" Dear brother !" exclaimed Julia in admiration.

" Think," continued Bernard indignantly, " of the abominable pelf that is heaped together within these walls, from which the paltry sum that would do but bare justice to them, would be no more missed than a child's handful of sand from the sea-shore ; and yet, this I cannot obtain !"

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"And these are the things," said Julia, "that make you so grave!"

"These are the things," replied Bernard, "that sear my spirit as with a hot iron,—that make my nights sleepless and my days miserable. The silence and desertion of Westow proclaim to the world the dishonour of our house; and upon me the whole weight and sense of that dishonour seem to have fallen!"

Julia could not console him; on the contrary, his acutely sensitive spirit communicated its anguish to hers. She never felt the full bitterness of her lot so severely as at that time.

Drearily the winter wore on; and few and far between came letters from Walter Constable. Julia could not deceive herself with the persuasion that he was prosperous: his letters were dated each from a different place, without any cause being assigned for this circumstance At length a long pause occurred. Julia's anxiety was intense; and to exhibit Bernard's state of feeling, we must give an interview between him and his father.

"I am come," said he, as he was admitted through the barred door into his father's room, "yet once more to demand from you a small sum

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of money to enable me to undertake a journey—in fact, to commence life for myself."

"You have had your answer already," returned Sir Harbottle, with more coolness than might have been expected; for even he, like Father Cradock, could not altogether resist Bernard's force of character, which had revealed itself in the many though ineffectual interviews that there had of late been between them;—"You have had your answer—I shall advance not one sixpence."

"My present life," continued Bernard, "is miserable to me beyond description; you cannot conceive the irksomeness of my daily inactivity."

"Oh, if that be all," replied Sir Harbottle, "work! I grant you, you have been idle—work, and welcome! I pay no inconsiderable sum to my labourers; occupy whatever place you like. I shall never object to your working!"

"Sir Harbottle," replied Bernard, "this is trifling; I should not come here to ask your permission to perform day-labour. It is extremely hard for a young man to be compelled to solicit thus painfully the miserable sum which I ask: how could ten or twenty pounds impoverish you?"

Sir Harbottle looked fixedly on his son without

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replying, and then turned doggedly to the newspaper that lay before him.

"I have heard," continued Bernard, knowing that his father would hear while he seemed to read, "that this estate came to you as a curse;—a singular and fearful bequest. God knows why such a curse—denounced perhaps by a sinner—should be permitted to have a terrible fulfilment; but of a truth so it is! It has operated frightfully, and even now has lost no power. Heaven knows, I say, why it is thus permitted; but, of a certainty, the hand of Almighty God is sorely against us."

"Young man," said Sir Harbottle, deeply struck by these unexpected words, and with a countenance agitated as Bernard had never seen before, "you talk of by-gone things—of things which you do not understand!"

"I speak only from too deep experience," replied he; "of things which are only too present with us! My father, can it be aught less than a sinner's curse which closes your heart against your children,—which makes money, and only money, of worth in your eyes! My comfort, my well-being, are less important to you than twenty golden coins!"

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"Had I lived the life of a spendthrift—of an imprudent, thriftless profligate, wasting my substance in riot and debauchery—the thing might have been as you say; I might have deserved these reproaches from you. But I did not so: I married a prudent woman—I retrenched my expenditure I lived carefully and practised the most rigid economy. I had the benefit of my descendants in view; I meant to do the best I could for my children. It is hard to be thus censured. I gave my sons, as far as I could judge, the education of gentlemen; and what has been the return? Ingratitude!—ingratitude, young man, and insolent profligacy!"

"That is but too true," replied Bernard, "of your elder children: of your younger at least, sir, you must make an exception."

"I have been robbed, threatened, circumvented!" continued Sir Harbottle, without noticing Bernard's interruption; "you know not what I have borne from them! I have laid up money, as you say—I have amassed wealth which would buy a kingdom; but have I been happy? My God! no! The ingratitude of my sons has cut me to the heart!"

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Sir Harbottle spoke as if thinking aloud; his lips quivered, his voice trembled, and he covered his face with both his hands when he had done.

"My father," said Bernard, laying his hand upon his arm, and deeply touched by so singular a display of emotion; "it is not the will of Heaven, which is full of blessing and mercy, that a sinner's curse should have power over our resolute determination to do right."

"Lookye," said Sir Harbottle, withdrawing his hands from his brow, and gazing fixedly at his son, "they have been scoundrels; I will cut them off with a shilling! I will make you the eldest son—and my curse light upon you if you relieve them in their sorest need by the value of one farthing!"

"Nay, nay," exclaimed Bernard, "that must not be: if thine enemy hunger, give him bread—if he thirst, give him to drink—how much more our own flesh and blood!"

"I will do it!" said Sir Harbottle vehemently; "I will make an elder son of you."

"Not with such restrictions as this," interrupted Bernard; "for this inheritance already has suffered too bitterly from a curse! But since

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you permit me the privilege of speaking with you on this subject, let me induce you to allow to Julia and myself such an income as your children may demand. On my soul, Sir Harbottle, we are both of us penniless; the beggar is better off than we! We will render you an account of its expenditure; only insure to us an income."

"I have told you what I will do—but I will not be dictated to," replied his father: "I will make you my sole heir! This very day I will do it."

"Let it be without the curse you speak of, then," said he; "for on such terms I would not accept the inheritance."

Sir Harbottle looked at his son with a mingled sentiment of surprise and contempt. "Thou art a chicken-livered fool!" said he: "I ate, and drank, and made merry, when this inheritance came to me; thou settest light by it tenfold!—But," continued he, after a pause, "to be candid with you: I have already destroyed my will; another is about being made; and look here—I will show you the worth of this inheritance; I show not this to every one!" And he laid before him bonds and mortgages—deeds and securities of money

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without end. "All this," said he, "is mine, and may be yours, besides this manor of Denborough, the manor of Knighton, and whatever is contained within these sealed bags." The bags of which he spoke were contained within the escritoir, and in an iron chest in the wall.

"And with all this wealth," said Bernard, almost bewildered by what he had seen, "you refuse to advance me even ten guineas!"

"This shall all be yours," returned Sir Harbottle: "I will cut those scoundrels off with a shilling! Hang them!—would you think it?—they have had their clutches in my bags! But, body o' me, they shall not touch another crown of mine!"

Bernard thought of his poverty, then looked at the temptation that was presented to him, and for some time he could not reply.

"How those vampires will stare!" muttered Sir Harbottle, "when they hear the will read!" The words decided Bernard.

"I ask not undue heirship," said he,—"nay, I refuse it. I would not entail upon myself the deadly feud between my brothers and myself which must thence ensue, with all its fearful conse-

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quences. I should consider myself answerable for whatever crimes they committed, — I could not accept the inheritance on such terms."

Sir Harbottle looked angrily on his son, and yet he replied calmly, "I will give you till to-morrow to consider it."

"No," said Bernard, "I should think to-morrow as I think now; or, if there were a chance of my thinking otherwise, I would reiterate my answer ten times this day. I cannot take advantage even of my brothers' misconduct—of their absence, though in prison! But, my father, instead of hoarding up in your lifetime to leave deadly hatred and animosity among your children after your death, take to yourself the noble privilege of doing justice—of using your wealth for its true end while you yet live. Make it the instrument of good. The time will come when one good action will outweigh mountains of gold!"

Sir Harbottle regarded him in amazement and anger: he had expected the most unbounded gratitude for his offer, and instead of appreciating the high principle of his refusal, despised him as a spiritless contemner of money.

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"Give me the means of leaving this place," said Bernard in reply to his father's scorn. "One hundredth part of the sum you can count any day will suffice for me. I have hitherto been but little chargeable to you; I will be less so in future."

"You are one of Father Cradock's followers," said Sir Harbottle. "Your intention is to take orders, I presume."

"I am not a Catholic," replied Bernard humbly. "From sincere conviction I have embraced the Protestant faith."

"And pray what mode of life is it your intention to follow? The sum you want is too little for a profession—too little even for a handicraft tradesman to begin his calling upon. You know nothing of the value of money. But let me know your wise schemes."

"It may perhaps appear foolish to you," said Bernard, a crimson blush covering his pale countenance; "but my intention is to support myself by writing."

"What!" replied Sir Harbottle contemptuously; "engrossing at a halfpenny a line in some pettifogging lawyer's office?"

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"No," said Bernard; "by original composition. I have thought deeply, I have read much; I am conscious of no inconsiderable powers of mind; and I doubt not, but in London——"

"Simpleton! greenhorn!" exclaimed Sir Harbottle, and then burst forth into a laugh of utter contempt. "Thank you, sir," continued he; "you have given proof of considerable originality of mind! And what the devil can you write about; or what do you know that would be worth putting on paper; or which has not been said a thousand times better before! This is some of the confounded nonsense which that fine scholar Constable has put in your head."

Bernard, though he knew that the sordid spirit of his father could not possibly be a judge of these things, felt for one moment humiliated and ashamed.

"Yes," continued Sir Harbottle scornfully, "write down that you have this day refused to be made heir of Denborough Park; that you have refused the inheritance of half a million, and there will be a piece of original composition! Write down also, like Dogberry, that you are an ass, and there will be an incontrovertible truth!"

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"Father," said Bernard, roused into energy by these taunts, "all this is the miserable sophistry of sordid avarice against your own reason. You know that this is cruelly unjust — you know that my request is humble, you yourself have acknowledged it; and as to my rejecting the offered inheritance, I did so because I will not take such an advantage of my brothers — not even of their crimes. Despise me as you will, my own soul tells me I have done right, and your own soul tells you so too: but I pray that you will not refuse me this small sum."

"I have told you," replied Sir Harbottle in his usual dogged tone, "that you will get no money from me. I know the league between you and that fellow Constable, and my money shall not go into that quarter."

"As to Mr. Constable," said Bernard, "his absence from Westow at this time is a perpetual dishonour to our house, if anything can dishonour it. We are the country's talk, its execration already. The world knows that Mr. Constable is a ruined man because of us,—we are chargeable with his misfortunes."

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"Very well," returned his father in his coldest tone.

"These things do not affect you," said Bernard: "they are to my spirit like fire applied to a wound."

A long pause ensued, and then again Bernard besought his father in his most energetic and persuasive manner to enable him to leave home. But Sir Harbottle remained inexorable.

"There are," at length said Bernard, "certain pictures in this house of considerable value; they have been to me like dear and faithful friends—I owe them much; they are the same to Julia. Give me but one of these pictures, then, since you refuse me money."

"Ay," said Sir Harbottle, a new light breaking in upon him; "they are of great value, you say?"

"Unquestionably," replied he; "they are divine works, and are attributed to celebrated masters: give me but the smallest picture among them, and I will be content."

"It would lessen the value of the house," said Sir Harbottle.

"The pictures might be destroyed by fire; and

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the damp of the unaired walls has already injured some," was Bernard's reply.

"Ho!" said Sir Harbottle, "a good idea!—certainly, certainly, certainly! fire might destroy; damps will endamage!—they shall be sold!"

"Sold!" repeated Bernard.

"Yes, yes," said Sir Harbottle,—"sold! And look you here, young man, I have an inventory of every picture in this house; and touch one at your peril!" Sir Harbottle drew forth from his multitudinous papers the one he spoke of, and sat down to study it.

Bernard, thunderstruck at the idea he had suggested to his father, sat in perfect consternation, provoked to the utmost also at having suggested it at all. To argue, he knew, was hopeless,—to remonstrate would be vain; the sale of the pictures promised too rich a harvest for the cupidity of Sir Harbottle ever to relinquish it. And, worse than all, how deeply—how cruelly would not Julia feel the loss of these pictures, endeared as many of them were by the reverence with which Lady Grimstone had regarded them!—and to Julia also, as to her mother, they were blended with religion. That divine Madonna, clasping

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the infant Saviour to her breast; that terribly sublime Crucifixion, which they together had reverenced, kneeling at their mother's knee; Christ's Agony in the Garden, which Bernard himself had studied so profoundly for its depth of mental and heart anguish, and which Julia could not see without tears; that triumphant picture of the Angels announcing to the Shepherds the birth of the Saviour, where the burst of heavenly radiance seemed to swallow up the clouds and darkness of night, like a sublime type of Christianity over the ignorance and superstition of the world—a glorious picture, fit to be the altar-piece of the noblest of cathedrals;—how could all these be given up! Bernard felt almost frantic at the idea.

"Would that I had gone penniless from this place," exclaimed he in anguish that he could not control, "rather than have brought this new bereavement upon Julia!"

"Every picture is set down here; and remove one of them at your peril!" said Sir Harbottle, glancing up from his paper as he heard Bernard's voice, though the meaning of his words had escaped his mind.

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Bernard made no reply, but internally cursing gold, and the lust of gold, he went out.

It was early in the month of February, and the evening had already set in, when Bernard, feeling it impossible to meet his sister in his perturbed state of feeling without adding to her uneasiness, hastily threw on his cloak and rushed out of the house to give way to the vehemence of his feelings, as was his wont, in the silence and solitude of the old park. It mattered not to him that the evening was one of the most comfortless of a comfortless season; the air damp and chilly, the earth wet and forlorn; and that from every tree under which he passed, the heavy moisture dropped as if from the roof of some damp and dripping cave. Bernard neither saw nor felt the desolate landscape which lay round him yet dimly discernible through the gathering darkness. His whole consciousness was absorbed in pondering on the miserable destiny that seemed to entrammel him as with iron bonds; and he walked on, unheeding whither he went, till he stood within the avenue at Westow. Bernard was like the spectre of this old place; many a night had he thus wandered about it, led there, as it seemed

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to him, by an irresistible spell. He started to find himself once more at this place, and his senses were at once acutely alive to every sound and object that was about him. He heard, through the deep silence of the scene, the heavy water-drops fall upon the masses of leaves that lay in heaps blown together under the trees; he heard the rustle and fluttering start of birds and small animals here and there as he passed; and then he saw before him the tall arched gateway, the closed gate—and beyond, the black, cheerless walls of the old mansion, with its tower-like porch rising up dark and silent into the night. All was profoundly still; there was no sign nor token of life. At length, as Bernard approached still nearer, the dog sent up a long and startling howl-like bark, that seemed to echo through the desertion of court and building and sounded to Bernard's excited feelings like an ominous voice of yet coming misfortune.

"We have made this place desolate," exclaimed Bernard internally; "we have driven its once cheerful inhabitants into exile; and whatever farther ruin hangs over them will be ours to answer for! But, so help me Heaven! justice

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shall be done to them. This one dishonour, at least, shall be removed from our house, though I die to accomplish it!"

Again the dog sent forth a long and dismal howl, and a black spectral-like figure seemed gliding under the shadow of the walls. Bernard stood still, his imagination excited to the utmost; —shadowy forms seemed to dance before his eyes, and strange unearthly sounds to ring in his ears. Again the dog howled dismally, and the black figure stood at his side.

"Ah, Father Cradock," said Bernard, "is it you?"

"I would to Heaven," returned the old man, "that the dog were silent! for after the news I have had, I like not that howling."

"What news?" demanded Bernard.

Father Cradock then related that he had received a letter from Mrs. Constable, dated Berlin, whither she was gone to attend upon her son, who was ill. The letter contained also the suspected truth that Walter's fortunes were unpropitious,—he had been disappointed in a hundred ways. It was, in every sense of the word, a melancholy letter. Poor Mrs. Constable pour-

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ed out in it all her unrestrained feelings to the father,—to him at least, she said, she could tell all; and it was some satisfaction, even in the midst of such deep anxieties as hers were — in the midst of a strange land, and a people whose language she could neither speak nor understand, —it was some satisfaction to pour out her heart thus freely to an old friend, and to think that the letter would be read in the dear house at Westow, from which both she and her son were unhappy outcasts, doomed perhaps to lay their bones in a foreign land. Mrs. Constable did not even say, "God's will be done!" In every sense of the word, the letter was a melancholy one.

Father Cradock, who forbore to speak his entire mind to Julia on the misfortunes of the Constables that he might not add to her anxieties, felt less scrupulous on this subject with her brother. Every word, however, that he spoke entered Bernard's heart like a dagger. And when he parted from the old man, he shook him cordially by the hand, internally blessing him as before a long parting, resolving with himself that he would leave Denborough Park penniless as he was; convert his very wardrobe into money, and

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retrieve by his single hand the fortunes of his friends.

A mind like Bernard's, in its hour of enthusiasm, casts a glory about whatever it contemplates; dangers affright not, nor can difficulties impede; it is as a strong angel whose wing can compass heaven and earth. In such a mood, Bernard, through the darkness and cheerlessness of the late evening, paced his old and well-known haunts, a happy visionary, achieving prosperity for his friends, and crowning himself with a poet's renown.

It was past the usual hour of retiring to rest when Bernard returned home. Julia was in her chamber; the domestics were dismissed to theirs; and Sir Harbottle, as was his nightly custom, was about to fasten bar and chain when Bernard entered. He glanced upon his son a look of surprise and displeasure, but no word passed between them. Bernard sat down by the almost extinguished embers of the kitchen hearth, still occupied by thoughts which were too engrossing to be lightly dismissed. But the enthusiasm was gone by—a heavy, crushing weight of duty seemed laid upon him, and his weakness, his friendless-

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ness, his utter penury, came also fearfully before him. He thought of his youth—of his proper station in society—of what life might have been to him could he but have enjoyed the natural advantages of that station. He was the very being of all others to have enjoyed to the utmost the most noble and elevated pleasures of life. Then from the beautiful vision he created, he turned to what he was—penniless in the midst of accumulating thousands;—a nature keenly sensitive and endowed with the nicest moral perceptions, in the midst of natures callous and gross as the common clods of the field. The very beggar in the street had advantages which he had not, for the beggar at least was fitted to his fortunes. Bernard looked round through the large gloomy kitchen in which he was seated; the wind came down the wide tall chimney with hollow and unearthly sounds; the remote parts of the room seemed filled with a moving darkness, and his lamp flickered and threw up fantastic circles and shapes of light upon the lofty and darkened ceiling. All this, which would have excited a common mind to terror harmonized with Bernard's feelings: he regarded himself as one acted upon by a strange destiny,

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and, in a sort of intoxication of mind, laughed as he thought of struggling with it.

The last ember had long been cold, and the hour of midnight had gone by, when Bernard bethought himself of taking repose. As he passed the room occupied by Sir Harbottle, and opening, as we have said, into the chamber he used, Bernard was surprised to see a light still burning there. "Does my father then count his money by night as well as by day?" thought he. The next moment it occurred to him that his father had perhaps fallen asleep in his chair, and Bernard returned to the door and knocked, intending to make him aware of his situation—perhaps of his danger. No answer however was returned, and Bernard knocked still louder, not supposing but the door was fastened inside. Again his summons was unanswered, and Bernard then turned the handle of the lock. To his surprise the door opened freely. Sir Harbottle, as Bernard had imagined, sat fast asleep in his chair; his lamp had burned low in the socket, and the escritoir was open before him; and before him also was an open bag of money, which he perhaps had been counting. The inventory of the pictures had fallen

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from his hand; sleep seemed to have overtaken him in the midst of calculations on this new source of money-making. So profoundly was he asleep, that the noise which Bernard made in entering the room, which was without any attempt at silence, did not wake him. His breathing was regular and inaudible, as that of one who slumbers calmly. Bernard looked upon his father with surprise: that he could sleep thus calmly was strange to him—for his own rest was painful and unquiet. His next thought was of the singular circumstance of a man who guarded the contents of this room—and especially of this escritoir, the immense value of whose contents Bernard himself had been shown that very day—with such jealous care through the day, should yet leave it thus unprotected during the night. "What would hinder," thought Bernard, "but that any one might carry off much of that treasure?—Even I myself might do it!"

A strange sensation passed over Bernard's heart—he felt tempted to do it. "What were that one bag to him—to me it would be everything!" thought he. He fixed his eyes intently on the gold, but he felt as if he dared not touch it. "Shall I make myself a thief—a night-robber?"

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said he internally: "No, no! I would to God he were awake!" So thought he, and yet he did not wake him; for he began to think of the vast hoard that Sir Harbottle possessed—of its utter uselessness with him—nay, even how it was a snare to his soul—and with a sincere loathing he cursed the spirit of avarice. He remembered his own unsuccessful pleading with him, day after day, for fifty, for twenty—nay, only for ten guineas; and now here lay ten times the sum before him as if for his behoof! "Oh," thought Bernard, "that I could but possess myself of it without sin—that it were but mine! Yet how do I know but this is an interposition of Providence for my behalf!"

The very idea brought with it its reproof and its reply. "What, to steal!" said the internal voice: "No! had it been Heaven's will, the heart of Sir Harbottle would have been softened. God wills not evil that good may come!"

Bernard thought he had resisted the temptation, and he suffered himself to look upon the money before him. "I am as the veriest beggar," mused he to himself—"I have not wherewithal to provide for my smallest needs—yet this very

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day I have refused the whole inheritance; and why? because I would not injure my brothers!"

How weak is human nature at the best! Bernard felt disturbed and angry as he had never felt till then. He had refused the whole inheritance from pure principle but a few hours before; and now he was disturbed, and fascinated as it were, by the sight of the gold. "He could not miss ten pieces—what were ten pieces to his abundance?" argued the weakness of his tempted heart. "No, no," again returned the internal monitor, "Thou shall not steal! Bear all things—suffer all things, Bernard, but degrade not thyself!"

Bernard smote his hand upon his forehead, and wished he had not been tempted; he put forth his hand to wake his father, but he withdrew it again, for he felt as if he could not bear that his father should see him.

"I should not have been tempted for myself!" reasoned Bernard, trying to silence the voice of self-accusation that *would* be heard; "I could not have been tempted to take it for my own pleasure: it is to enable me to do justice—to do what is barely honest—to subject myself to

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unknown difficulties, trials, and hardships, so that I might but restore to Mr. Constable that sum whereby he is impoverished for our sakes! Accursed were I to desire this gold for my own pleasure—for my own gratification—for my own advantage; but a heavy, an imperious duty is upon me!"

"God forgive me if I commit sin!" said Bernard, as with suppressed breath, a throbbing heart, and a feeling of desperation, he softly put forth his hand and took up ten gold pieces.

"I am a thief!" muttered he as he felt the money in his hand; "I have robbed my own father! God Almighty forgive me!" And with a countenance pale as death, a noiseless step, and trembling limbs, Bernard went out.

"I am a thief!" murmured he as he stole onward to his chamber; and then barring the door and flinging the money from him, he threw himself into a chair and sat like one stupified by some overwhelming blow.

"The curse has indeed lighted upon our house!" groaned he at length. "Has it not made me a thief—a night-plunderer! What hinders now but that I should do murder!"

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"My God! my God!" again exclaimed he in an agony of inexpressible anguish, "it is I myself that have brought this curse upon me—by my own pride I have fallen! I have prided myself on intellect, on high principle, on purity of heart! I have called myself better than they; and what am I! I could not resist temptation—I could not wait thy hour—miserable wretch that I am!"

Bernard wrung his hands, smote his breast, and then sat in a stupor of utter misery, deeper, heavier, more soul-agonizing than death.

Before the morning had dawned, Bernard, wrapped in his cloak, and with his hat pulled over his brows, stole out of the house, and with the hurried steps of one who flies from the Avenger, hastened through the park down to Wood Leighton, and then to the nearest town whence a stage-coach passed on its way to London. He took no change of raiment with him; he left no token whatever behind him, not even to Julia; but, utterly self-degraded, went forth desiring never to repass the threshold—never to behold the face of his sister, till he had cleansed from his soul the miserable stain which his misfortunes and his hour of weakness had affixed upon him.

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CHAPTER XIV.

When Sir Harbottle woke, his lamp had burned out, and it was with the utmost terror that he discovered the situation in which he had been; his escritoir open, his treasures undefended. The room was perfectly dark, and it was only by groping about that he ascertained his valuables to remain much as he had left them. The ten guineas which had been abducted, he did not then miss. He closed the desk, and pocketed his keys with the satisfaction of one who has rescued his all from destruction. This important point ascertained, Sir Harbottle set himself about to procure a light; and then going the round of his apartments, and assuring himself, after the fearful discovery that his door actually was unbarred, that no robber lurked within them, the clock struck three, and he went to his bed wondering still with himself how so unparalleled an event could have happened; and blessing himself that Christopher and Robert were within strong walls at a moment which otherwise they could not have failed to avail themselves of.

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The morning light made known to Sir Harbottle the loss he had sustained; ten guineas were of a certainty gone, and his suspicious terror was ready to believe much more. He rushed from his room with the alarming information that he had been robbed,'—robbed, as he declared, to what amount he knew not. The few domestics were questioned; even Julia herself underwent a scrutiny. Bernard was the last suspected; but when the whole day passed and he did not make his appearance, the father, with imprecations and terrible vows of vengeance, declared every one of his sons thieves! Julia maintained and solemnly believed him incapable of so base an action. His absence, she said, might appear suspicious at that particular time, but in itself was not extraordinary: Bernard had often absented himself from home for weeks, and this absence was but as those. It was morally impossible, she declared, that one so noble, so pure, so unsolicitous for money as he was, should have taken so desperate a means of obtaining any; the bare suspicion went to her soul. Sir Harbottle persisted in his opinion, and hinted of the conversations his son had of late had with him—of his

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pertinacious desire to obtain the money for Mr. Constable; and, taking for granted what he was willing to believe possible, he declared his loss to be upwards of three hundred pounds, which left no doubt upon the fact. Bernard was gone off to Mr. Constable with the money, Sir Harbottle maintained, endeavouring to persuade himself that his loss was to that amount, though the ten guineas were all he could actually miss. "But," reasoned he with himself, "is it likely that so small a sum would content him? were not thousands of pounds as ready to his touch as one single ten! It is not likely that so little would satisfy him; I have been robbed to the amount of Constable's money at least."

Days went on, and weeks, and no tidings came of the fugitive. The weeks grew into months, the spring came, and the summer, but nothing could bring pleasure to Julia. She had heard from Walter, — no word was said of her brother, and the most dreadful anxiety and apprehension filled her mind. What had become of him! Was it indeed possible that he had been guilty of theft, and had left his home a dishonoured man for ever! No, she could not wrong him so far as

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to entertain the belief. What seemed far more probable to her, yet still terrible to believe, was, that he had absented himself, as he had done before, to leave behind him the annoyances of Denborough Park, — and was perhaps dead, in poverty, among strangers, or was enduring even then she knew not what hardship, privation, and suffering. But why then had he not taken leave of her—why had he not spoken to her of his intention? He must have known the dreadful anxiety she would suffer on his account.

Father Cradock took many a journey to gain, if possible, some information respecting him: but all was fruitless—not even the slightest clue could be obtained by which to discover his movements, or the place of his concealment. It was a dark and inextricable subject — one on which it was misery to think, but one at the same time which it was impossible to forget. Even Walter Constable was much less the object of Julia's solicitude than formerly, and every night her sleep was haunted by dreams of her brother. She saw him dead; dying; imploring for help; reduced to unimaginable suffering. She went through floods to rescue him, and through fire; she passed through every

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infliction of fantastic misery to afford him help, and then seemed mocked by fearful spectres, hurled down precipices, or whirled through the air at a mad and bewildering speed; and she woke fevered, terrified, and filled with indefinite horrors. A settled melancholy rested on her spirit; she felt incapable of exertion, and feared many a time that this terrible suspense, this friendless, incommunicable grief, would leave her a feeble maniac.

Father Cradock saw with intense anxiety the change that was coming over her, and exerted himself in a hundred ways to divert her thoughts. Excellent old man! she was to him dear as a daughter. He prayed for her, he wept for her, he never ceased to think of her; devising with unwearied love and sympathy many a source of amusement and employment of thought, so that her mind might be turned from this most painful and bewildering subject of interest. The necessity for exertion, in order to appease the good man's anxieties, was of incalculable benefit to her. Julia's sense of gratitude, and her religious faith, mastered her intensest anguish;

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and, as the summer went on, she again began to see and feel the healing spirit of external nature. She and Father Cradock walked forth together in the park, even into those very dingles and woodland hollows so long the resort of Bernard, and which seemed filled with remembrances of him. She saw again the beauty of flowers, of running waters, of trees—nay, of all created things; and her soul overflowed with love and thankfulness, though her heart never ceased to bleed.

All this time Sir Harbottle Grimstone had been occupied by the idea which Bernard had suggested; the sale of the pictures. The first intimation Julia had of such a design was by a London picture-dealer being introduced into the apartments which had always been considered as sacred to her, her mother and Bernard, as in the former days they had been devoted to Mrs. Ashenhurst and her daughter, and which, even spite of the general discomfort and neglect of the house, had such an aspect of elegance and comfort as was necessary to their more refined spirits. In these rooms were those pictures we have

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particularly enumerated — pictures said to be by Raphael, Carlo Dolci, and Annibal Caracci; and pictures, of a truth, they were worthy of their reputed authors, and which had become objects of reverential regard to Lady Grimstone and her children. To Julia they had been as friends, counsellors, and companions; and many a time in her hours of darkness, and almost despair, had she gathered strength and comfort from their contemplation. What then was her astonishment, her grief, in discovering that it was the design of her father to despoil her of them! But it was at the very time that her soul was overwhelmed, and utterly subdued by her painful anxieties for her brother; and as one incapable of resistance, she passively sat by,—heard the chaffering between her father and the dealer; saw the bargain struck, —and though she felt as if the only light of her life was put out, yet made no opposition.

As strength returned to her spirit, and she in some measure had overcome the agony of her grief for the loss of her brother, the full extent, however, of this new and unexpected trial came

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sensibly upon her, and she felt how cruelly she was about to be bereaved.

In a few weeks more, whatever pictures were of any value were gone; and instead of them remained only the unsightly, discoloured, or yet unfaded spaces of wall where they had hung. What a blank on every side! The walls seemed to her as faces from which all intelligence was gone. She felt as one whom a sudden calamity had deprived at once of many friends—on all hands their places were vacant.

Sir Harbottle sat counting over this unlooked-for accession to his treasure, which wanted but ten guineas to make up a large round sum, when a packet was presented him. He opened it. It was from Bernard, and contained ten guineas with a letter. The sight of the money—the exact sum, at the very moment when it was wanted, filled the soul of the miserable man with such delight as a child feels when it finds unexpectedly the toy for which it has been longing. Sir Harbottle chuckled over the money, shook it within his closed palms, and with a burst of exultation clapped it upon the that-much-wanting ten thousand pounds.

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When he had satisfied his soul with the contemplation of the perfected beauty and the goodly display of so much coined money, he broke the seal and read as follows :—

" ——July 17.

" I charge you not with having compelled me to the degrading act of which I have been guilty. In the hour of temptation my soul's strength failed me—I became a thief !

" Oh, how this word has haunted me !—It has been a spectre by my bed—it has pursued me in crowds — it has been with me in solitude ! My father, you have been avenged ! It matters not to me that the sum was small—was as nothing in comparison of your abundance : I took it while you slept — I robbed you to possess myself of money. In vain I have argued that my intention was upright,—the fulfilment of what my soul held to be a sacred and imperious duty ; the act has poisoned my peace ! I have abhorred myself because of it. You have indeed been avenged !

" I need not tell you of bodily suffering ; of privation ; of cold and hunger ; of friendlessness ; disappointments ; soul-weariness ; toils and watch-

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ings, which I have gone through to purge from my soul this deadening and desolating self-accusation. I have done it as far as in me lay. I return you the money of which I deprived you. God Almighty blot out the remembrance of the act!

"I shall now begin to live; I shall dare to look my fellow-men in the face: for if I have sinned, I am no longer degraded by that sin; and, humbled yet not abject, I can crave your forgiveness, doubting not but Heaven also has forgiven me. Your son, BERNARD."

Sir Harbottle's immediate sentiment on reading this letter was one to which he had hitherto been a stranger. He was sorry for his son; the letter made him uneasy, and he wished it had never been written. He thought at the time that he would rather never have seen his ten guineas again than have regained them accompanied by such a letter; and he determined to do something for him—to advance him even a handsome sum. Before long, however, Sir Harbottle had counted over again his ten thousand guineas, and he hardly remembered Bernard's ten—they

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looked no way different to the nine hundred and ninety others: he could see in their shining surfaces neither toil of body nor suffering of mind; he only remembered that his sum of money was completed.

When he thought of Bernard again, he wondered to what place any money could be sent to him. He turned to the letter; it left him without a clue. It was clearly impossible that he could remit to him; Bernard had given no address; "And," argued the miser, willing to satisfy his own conscience by doing nothing, "perhaps after all he does not desire my assistance; ten to one but he is even now well off, or why did he so readily part with his money?" The argument was conclusive, and Sir Harbottle contrived to think very little more of his son.

The packet also contained a letter for Julia. In it Bernard acknowledged the crime of which he had been guilty and prayed her forgiveness, — her forgiveness also of what must have appeared his cruel desertion of her. "But," said he, "I was driven from your presence by a sense of degradation and sin; nor could I write to you till I was enabled to remove the stigma from me

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by restoring the money." He told her, however, nothing of his present condition—of his past sufferings, nor of what he intended to do for the future; still he spoke cheerfully—spoke of hope and assurance, and poured out such overflowings of affection, of consolation—of what seemed almost like joyous-heartedness,—for he *was* joyous-hearted at that moment, in the approving consciousness of clearing his soul from a haunting memory,—that although Julia bathed the letter with tears, she could not but gather comfort from it. In the end Bernard promised to let her hear again from him; but he furnished no address by which she had any means of communicating with him.

The particulars of Bernard's absence, where he was, what he had suffered, and how he had obtained the ten guineas, it is not for us at present to relate. Our readers, like Julia, must remain a while longer in ignorance. In the mean time, the year wore on; autumn succeeded summer, winter succeeded autumn; and the next year passed on also. These two years saw the bloom vanish from the countenance of Julia Grimstone; how could it be otherwise? Sir

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Harbottle, on the public disgrace of his sons, had resigned his commission of the peace—because even he, callous as he was, could not but feel the odium of his family — and thenceforward confined himself almost entirely to Denborough Park, but rarely indeed going out of his own rooms—except into the kitchen to keep an exact look-out upon the domestic expenditure. This sedentary and inactive life soon produced visible effects upon him. He grew heavy and unwieldy in person; irritable and morose in temper; full of jealousy and suspicion; doling forth every shilling with hard parsimony as if it were the very wringing out of his heart's blood, drop by drop. Melancholy indeed was his daughter's life, and her home-annoyances increased daily. The domestics were mostly dismissed, for none would live with the miser who had a chance of better service elsewhere,—and who indeed had not? Poor Julia herself sometimes thought the domestics were less to be pitied than she; for they could mend their condition, she was bound to endure it.

Just about the time when Denborough Park was in a fair way of being left without domestic of any kind, our old acquaintance Milly Freckleton, who

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left her small hostelry at Tutbury shortly after the Grimstones' committal, and whose granddaughter, the fair Peggy Woodhouse, fatally connected as she was with Christopher Grimstone, was working day and night to support herself and her child, as well as to afford to its father many a little comfort and indulgence in his prison—volunteered her services at Denborough Park as general domestic manager, on such extraordinarily low terms as insured her acceptance with the master. Milly had now lived there for several months, contriving, for reasons which she would have been extremely sorry to reveal, to make herself a valuable and not unimportant personage in the miser's household.

Most melancholy, as we said before, was Julia's heart and home; and more especially so because a cloud still hung upon the fortunes of Walter Constable. His letters came but rarely, and Julia felt too deeply that he was no longer the buoyant-hearted man he had been; he was striving against fortune. Mrs. Constable's return too to Westow was yet longer delayed, and Julia could not doubt for a moment as to the cause of that delay. But one letter also had been received from Ber-

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nard, and that left her still in anxious uncertainty. The nabob's curse was indeed fulfilled both upon Sir Harbottle and his descendants.—But we have not yet done with poor Julia's troubles. Father Cradock, who was far advanced in years, and had become of late greatly enfeebled in body, died at the house of a rich Catholic at two counties' distance, whither he had gone to take his leave, being himself conscious of decaying strength, and intending for the future to decline all journeys and take up his residence at Denborough Park or Westow, so that he might supply to Julia the friends she had lost; to be always at hand to be the counsellor and comforter that she so deeply needed.

Excellent old man! He was indeed a true disciple of Christ, humble, patient, long-suffering; kind as a tender-hearted woman, simple-minded as a little child! Crushed and broken as Julia's spirit was, it had yet to learn that it had an acuter anguish still to endure in the loss of this good man — this true friend who had been to her as a parent. Nor was this anguish lessened by the affecting proof of his more than paternal regard which she received with the intelligence of his death—that the poor priest had

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made her the heir of his long and painfully accumulated little property, amounting to somewhat less than six hundred pounds.

The death of Father Cradock left Julia indeed bereaved, and in the desolation of her heart she questioned what was the next anguish she would have to bear. Were all those she loved to be removed from her? was she to stand alone like a blasted tree in the midst of a wilderness? There are times when the meekest spirit raises a cry of remonstrating agony. "Lord, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me!" Such was the bitter cry of Julia's spirit as she looked round and saw herself so stripped and so forlorn.

CHAPTER XV.

Before the term of the Grimstones' imprisonment had expired, the Earl of N—— died, and Miss Hammond was married to her honourable lover. Sir Harbottle Grimstone, as might be expected, peremptorily refused to become surety for his sons in the recognisance which was demanded from them; and they might have remained seven

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years instead of seven months longer for want of bail, had they not been liberated without it by the intervention of Mr. Finch himself. Men like these could not be improved by a thirty months' residence in a gaol; their return to Denborough Park even yet more added to the humiliations and griefs of Julia.

It was many weeks before Sir Harbottle would see his sons, and more before he would permit them to sit down at table with him; for he knew full well that the longer he kept up enmity with them, the less prospect was there of a demand being made upon him for money; and Christopher, he knew, was not as easily to be denied as Bernard. Sir Harbottle bought a new patent lock for his iron chest, took more than usual care not to lose sight or hold of his keys, and made up his mind to maintain this coldness towards them as long as possible. In a short time, however, Christopher, who better than any one living knew how to manage his father, regained some of his old influence over him, and even obtained money from him; Sir Harbottle making this a new and convenient plea for the indulgence of his beloved parsimony. "He had to find money for Chris-

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topher;"—"Christopher, or Christie, as he familiarly called him, was the very deuce for money;" or, "he had just left himself penniless by paying bills for Christopher,—the devil take him!" So said Sir Harbottle many a time when called upon for money which an excuse would save him from advancing. And the world, who knew both father and son, while they wondered not at the extravagance and recklessness of the latter, held up their hands and marvelled not a little that the former would open his bags to him, especially after the warning he had had already.

Considerable as seemed to be the influence Christopher had over his father, there were many points he could not carry with him, and especially his favourite one of obtaining from him the house at Knighton, now long uninhabited, with a sufficient allowance to maintain him there as eldest son. "When Christopher was married, if he married to please him," Sir Harbottle replied, "he would talk about it: the house wanted a deal of repair, and he was not going to lay out money upon it without something to look forward to. A wife's fortune would alter the case, and till then Christie must run with the

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rest; there was plenty of room at Denborough Park for all of them!"

Christopher knew that the house at Denborough Park was large enough; but he wanted more room for him and his than he dared to let his father know of. He shrugged his shoulders, bit his lips in his father's presence, cursed and swore behind his back, and then sat down by the kitchen-fire to talk over with old Milly Freckleton affairs which nearly concerned them both; for Peggy Woodhouse, who was by this time the mother of three children, had induced Christopher to marry her, and both Christopher and the old woman had to keep their wits at work to maintain this young family.

Christopher and Robert Grimstone to all appearance returned to a life similar to the one they had practised before their imprisonment. The elder brother ruled, the younger served. They still dressed well, and to all seeming were not without money. They went and came as they listed, and not unfrequently were absent from Denborough Park several weeks together, no one seeming aware of their movements but Milly Freckleton, who always carefully provided for

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their return. Julia could not but remark the good understanding between them, and wondered that the jealous eyes of her father should appear unaware of a circumstance in itself not without suspicion: but in truth Sir Harbottle was too well satisfied with the old woman, who refused all domestic help, who asked but small wages, and was always assiduous to please him, to see willingly anything faulty or suspicious in her. Milly, he persisted, was the very jewel of housekeepers; he had a fair word and a smile for her whenever they met: and Milly, on her part, was too desirous of maintaining her post for the sake of her granddaughter and her children, to give the miser offence willingly. Julia soon saw that the old woman had an importance and value in Sir Harbottle's eyes beyond what she herself could boast of. All these things cost her many a sigh, but she looked on and was silent.

In the course of the next winter four new inmates were discovered at Denborough Park. It happened in this way. There was among the outbuildings a small dwelling-house, which in the munificent days of General Dubois had been inhabited by the family of the head groom. The

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place itself, like all the outbuildings, through many years of neglect and disuse, had fallen into decay; yet here for several months had been secreted Peggy Woodhouse,— Grimstone, as she was now,— and her three elder children, and here a fourth had been born. When first they entered upon their abode, it contained only such few articles of indispensable use as Milly could abstract from the hall without fear of detection, and was indeed a comfortless place; but, by degrees, as they remained week after week undiscovered, Christopher and the old woman grew bolder, and removed into it many a piece of luxurious grandeur from the locked-up rooms, which, in the days of the nabob, it was little expected would ever be removed to furnish forth the house of the groom; and poor Peggy's little rooms, while they presented a curious display of incongruous plenishing, assumed a comfortable and home-like appearance; and Peggy herself, pale, anxious, and care-worn as her countenance had been, regained somewhat of her former beauty, as day after day, week after week, went on, and she remained undisturbed in what she began to look upon as her settled home. Add to which,

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(and it was the great whole of Peggy's happiness,) Christopher was constantly at Denborough Park, and what was more, constantly or nearly constantly sober the whole time; for the necessity of preserving the secret of his wife's residence there, kept him always watchful over himself as well as over his father. Sir Harbottle, unknown to himself, was well nigh a prisoner in his own rooms; which, it must be confessed, he was never very willing to leave when his sons were at home.

How it was managed that five mouths were daily secretly supplied from the parsimonious larder of Sir Harbottle, is more than we can tell; but supplied they were. It is also mysterious how the children were kept silent, and within the bounds of their concealment; although the eldest was a strong-limbed, active, and most indomitable lad, with all the elements of his father's character about him. Some one of these causes, it might have been imagined, would have led to their detection; but it was not so: their detection was occasioned by the thin column of smoke which Sir Harbottle observed to ascend from among the old outbuildings at various times. Christopher knew that this could not be seen

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from his father's room, nor from the kitchen; where, in the winter-season, to save the expense of a fire in the great dining-hall, they commonly took their meals. It could only be seen from the window of the lobby, through which Sir Harbottle passed to and from the kitchen; but through which window there was no necessity for him to look at all. The sight of this smoke, however, now and then did catch his eye, and he jealously inquired the cause of it. Milly or Christopher, either of them, had an answer ready. At one time the smoke came, Christopher said, from the saddle-house, where he had lighted a fire for his own purposes; another time Milly was washing, or Robert was mending a cart, and needed a fire for his work; or, if none of this would serve, Christopher would outface his father, and persist in there being no smoke at all.

At length Sir Harbottle, who had slily glanced through this window for several days, and either morning, noon, or night seen this suspicious smoke, began to think, as he said to himself, that all was not right, and therefore, without remarking the circumstance either to his son or

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to the old woman, hastened to discover the fire for himself. Through many a labyrinth of court-yard, ruinous stables, and half-falling outbuildings, he traced out the smoke which issued from the house of the whilom groom. Without making any attempt on the door, Sir Harbottle looked through the window, the lower half of which was fastened up with boards, intended partly to serve as a shutter, and partly to defend the broken panes of glass; and, to his astonishment, he beheld the inmates, his son Christopher, Peggy, and her four children. The rage of Sir Harbottle cannot be described; he felt choked with passion, and ascending the seven steps of the door at two strides, shook it violently; and, with almost inarticulate anger, demanded admittance. When Sir Harbottle entered, Christopher had vanished, and poor Peggy, pale and trembling, stood before him.

Sir Harbottle, unable to speak from rage, glanced round the room, and recognised the furniture of his own house,—tables, chairs, carpet, looking-glass, and all. He had never been in such a paroxysm of anger before; he would gladly have trampled everything to dust that he saw before

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him: it was several seconds before he could articulate his indignation.

"Oh! sir, I am his wedded wife!" exclaimed Peggy, in reply to Sir Harbottle's coarse accusations, — "I am his wife, sir, and these are his innocent children!"

Sir Harbottle's reply was a denial of her words.

"Nay, nay!" exclaimed Peggy, "what I tell you is true,—I am his wedded wife: he himself would not deny it!"

"Where is he?" demanded Sir Harbottle: "let him tell me so if he dare!"

"He will not deny it,—he cannot deny it!" said poor Peggy, weeping, and endeavouring vainly to pacify the younger children, who, terrified at the loud and angry voice of Sir Harbottle, clung crying to her.

The noise of the crying children irritated him still more; and now shouting to his son and bidding him come forth from his hiding-place, and then pouring forth imprecations upon the distressed and terrified group that stood before him, Sir Harbottle worked himself into a frenzy of passion, which left him no power of cohe-

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rent language, and made him hideous to look upon.

"You are a wicked, ugly man, and I will thrash you!" screamed out the eldest boy, seizing a stick that lay on the floor, and, with a face inflamed with passion, attempted to strike at Sir Harbottle even while he shrank from his furious eye.

"You are a wicked, ugly man, and I hate you!" repeated the boy, while his mother in a perfect agony endeavoured to silence and keep him back.

Sir Harbottle stalked up to him, and griping him by the shoulder, flung him on the floor! The heavy sound of the fall, the child's sudden silence, the blood that started from his mouth, and the thrilling scream of the mother that he was dead, recalled Sir Harbottle in some measure to himself. Peggy threw her youngest child into the cradle, pushed the others aside, and snatching him up, took him on her knee, and began to rub his temples.

Sir Harbottle stayed to see that the child was not dead; and then muttering an indistinct murmur of anger, like the distant growling of thunder, went out.

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It was a fortunate thing for Peggy and her children that this happened. Sir Harbottle was really moved; some mysterious, electric link of association was touched, — the unhappy, long-forgotten Judeth and her poor dumb boy returned to his memory, and for their sakes his hard nature relaxed. Sir Harbottle shut himself in his rooms, and was seen by no one of his household again that day.

Had Christopher known what his father's feelings were, he would not have failed to take advantage of an occurrence so favourable to him; but as it was, he carefully avoided meeting him for at least a week. Peggy in the mean time was unremoved, and Milly undertook to introduce the subject to Sir Harbottle.

"But ay dear-a-me!" said Milly, as if in surprise, when she had heard his observations on the new inmates, and in reality had been amazed at the moderated severity of his temper,—"But ay dear-a-me! you would not let her be starved!"

"You have taken good care not to let that happen; she does not look in a starving condition!" rejoined he.

"She is a decent, pretty-behaved young woman!"

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said Milly, anxious to get Sir Harbottle's approval in any shape. "He might ha' married a lady-born, and had one less of a lady in look or manner either; or he might ha' brought home some tasselling wench that would ha' been more plague nor profit."

"What the deuce must he marry for at all!" asked Sir Harbottle wrathfully, "unless he could marry a woman with money?"

"Young folks," replied she, "isn't like old ones! I 'd uphold her for coming of a decent family and having had a good bringing up—she 's so pretty behaved!"

"Pretty the devil!" muttered Sir Harbottle in contemptuous anger; "don't talk to me about her!"

"Dear heart!" replied Milly, "for sartain you don 't mean her to be starved, and she the mother of your son's children, and his wedded wife into the bargain?"

"Let those that brought her here, maintain her!" said Sir Harbottle, doggedly; "it is no business of mine!"

Milly knew from experience that Sir Harbottle's sullen humours were more difficult to manage than

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his violent ones; and muttering therefore a "Dear heart!" and a "Lord bless us!" she went out, intending to urge with Christopher his taking advantage before long of the forbearance which his father, spite of his ill humour, was disposed to extend to the intruders. Christopher did so, and bore the scornful vials of his father's indignation and anger: he had his own purposes to serve, and therefore he bore them patiently. "He behaved extremely well," as Sir Harbottle internally said; and though it was yielded but slowly, and with the worst grace in the world, yet Christopher obtained permission that Peggy, whom he acknowledged as his wife, and her children, might yet continue to inhabit their former dwelling, provided neither she nor they ever entered the Hall. Christopher was satisfied; whatever further was needed, old Milly, or some more favourable time, would obtain. He however carefully kept from his father's knowledge Milly's relationship to his wife; and fortunately for all parties Sir Harbottle was too willing to forget the existence of Peggy and her children, to make inquiries about her family.

Julia, who before this discovery had been, like her father, aware of some secret connected with

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the outbuildings in which both Milly and her brother Christopher were much interested, had forborne to inquire into it from fearing that the discovery might only add yet more to her discomforts; and that since her influence in that ill-regulated household was so small, it was far more to her peace to remain in willing ignorance. Her own apartments, at least, were sacred from intrusion: she had but to take her meals with her family, and then, for the rest of the day, she could close the doors and shut in there her own sorrows—indulge her own thoughts and memories, and fear no intrusion, for she was too unimportant a person to be sought after or needed by any one. Add to this, her spirit had insensibly received the impression of early death; and though her eye was sunken, and her cheek, instead of the bright bloom of her youth, was now marble pale like her brow, and her frame had lost much of its roundness and elastic buoyancy, yet excepting these, which no one had kindly and anxiously regarded, her general health had not failed. The impression, however, was heavy on her spirit, and in the deep religion of her soul she dedicated herself to good works through the remnant of her

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days, blessing God that, although the death of the good Father Cradock had made her solitary life yet more solitary, still his sacred bequest furnished her with a small fund at her own disposal, and enabled her to set about those benevolent schemes which she had planned many a time without power hitherto to accomplish. She visited the poor in the neighbouring hamlet, hearing all their domestic troubles and grievances, sympathising when she could not succour, and in many cases giving what was better than money—the benefit of her experience and good counsel. The blessings of this intercourse of Christian love were mutual; there was healing for Julia's own heart in the interest it took in the cares and sorrows of others. At home likewise she found it a consolatory employment to make up garments, like Dorcas of old, for their comfort and use. Our hearts are made for human sympathies, for the admission of human kindness; and stripped and heart-broken as Julia had been, she found, in these works of love, that even for her there was peace and joy. All this, however, was strictly kept from the knowledge of Sir Harbottle; for though the money was her own, the fact of giving away even *that* would not

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have failed to make a breach between her father and herself.

The strict embargo which had formerly confined Peggy and her children within the narrow limits of their concealment being removed, it was not long before Julia became acquainted with the persons of all. The eldest boy John—or as he was more characteristically called, Jack—she met at every turn, always in mischief, and perpetually in danger; a strong-limbed, bold-visaged, and audacious boy—a very Christopher in youth. As she walked through the wilderness of shrubbery, a tree-branch would crack, and down would drop the urchin to the ground, from a height which would have broken another boy's leg, or perhaps neck, but only left him with a bruise, a scratch, or a torn jacket. She was never safe from the stones he was continually hurling in every direction. There seemed to be a sort of ubiquity about him: if she avoided one part of the grounds because he was there, two minutes afterwards he would be whittling sticks, or blowing through a shrill whistle behind the very tree where she was standing. Nor was he a boy to be impressed with either fear or reverence: he stalked up to the very windows of

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Sir Harbottle's room, scrawled with a pebble on the glass which he had been at some pains to reach, or sent forth a screaming shout of a sudden, without aim or meaning—unless it was with the graceless intent of frightening Sir Harbottle. Julia tried in vain to attach him to her, in the hope of taming him and bringing him into subjection; for his bold black eye and his laughing face did not fail to draw her early attention. But he was not a child for a woman to train: he whistled while she talked to him, or started off after a rabbit or a bird at the very moment when she hoped his attention was fixed on her words. Julia sighed as she looked upon him, and thought what such a character would become with training and example such as he would have. Far different from him was Amy, his twin-sister—a meek, fair-haired, and delicate child—the very counterpart of her brother. She, likewise, Julia met many times in the grounds, wandering in quiet thoughtfulness, or leading by the hand her younger brother, careful and overflowing with love, as if she had been a tender and gentle-hearted mother. Amy, whose nature was alive to kindness, and who had a quick perception of whatever is graceful and amiable, soon distin-

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guished Miss Grimstone as a being to be loved; and while the same kind feelings were growing in Julia's heart towards her, her own soul was yearning towards Julia with an enthusiasm of love. Julia knew not that often little Amy had stood behind a bush to watch her go by, and had sent a kiss after her;—nay, that once as she was seated on the grass deeply engrossed by her own thoughts, the little maiden, whose heart could resist the impulse no longer, had stolen quietly behind her and kissed the hem of her garment, and then as quietly stolen back again unperceived. Such were the elder children of Christopher Grimstone.

For some time Julia carefully avoided meeting the mother, in the belief that she must be a degraded, vulgar woman, such as the associate of her brother Christopher might be expected to be; and Peggy, modest, retiring, and deeply conscious of the suspicion that naturally attached to her—and with many a sore heart-grief of her own, so far from obtruding herself upon Miss Grimstone's notice, shrank back at her approach; or if they did chance accidentally to meet, dropped a humble curtsey and went on. Poor Peggy! like little Amy, her heart yearned to the gentle sister

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of her reprobate husband; and "Oh," sighed she many a time, "were it but possible for her to know all, she would not shun me!"

This modest demeanour soon attracted Julia's attention; and though no nature could possibly be fuller of unsuspecting kindness and true charity than hers, yet so little confidence had she in whatever was connected with her elder brothers, that she doubted if this modest seeming might not be a deep-laid trick to gain her notice.

At length the love which we have said little Amy had conceived for Miss Grimstone could contain itself no longer; and one morning in May, as they met in the shrubbery, Julia having looked kindly upon her, the little girl, spite of her natural timidity, thrust her hand softly into hers, and in a low gentle voice asked "if she would please to talk to her."

There was so much good faith and perfect artlessness in the child's manner, that Julia's heart received her at once. She kissed her forehead and blessed her. A happy child was Amy that day,—an exceedingly happy child! and from that time she became Julia's constant out-of-doors companion; for Sir Harbottle rigorously inter-

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dicted them the house. Through Amy, Julia also became acquainted with the mother, and by degrees deeply interested for her.

Oh, what an overflowing fountain of kindness and trusting love was that poor young woman's heart! By little and little the whole story of the unhappy connexion with Christopher Grimstone was related. Peggy had been deceived, betrayed by him; had suffered endless privation and hardship for his sake, and had borne from him every neglect, wrong, and unkindness, which man can inflict on trusting woman: yet still she loved him;—how devotedly, her meekness, her forbearance — her endeavours to win back his faithless heart by every loving and gentle wile, told far more than words. "Oh," said poor Peggy many and many a time, "I will do ten times more for him; I will bear even more than I have already borne from him—if not for affection only, for gratitude; for has he not made me his wife!"

One thing, however, there was which Peggy did not reveal: that was the relationship between herself and Milly. This was a secret which was rigorously enjoined upon her both by her hus-

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band and the old woman. Milly had a hundred opportunities of serving all parties, as the careful housekeeper in the confidence of Sir Harbottle, which she would have lost entirely as the grandmother of Christopher's wife; and Peggy loved her children too well to betray a secret in which their well-being was involved.

Julia could not but respect and admire the devotedness and the submissive fidelity of this young woman; and Peggy, on her part, looked on Julia as on an angel from Heaven, and soon, spite of her troubles and cares, grew comparatively happy. She carried her baby into the sunshine, strolled into the park, looked cheerful, and might even be heard singing, morning, noon, and night. To Sir Harbottle, however, she was always invisible; or if he saw her, it was as though he saw her not: and Peggy retained such an awful remembrance of his first introduction to her, that she would as soon have encountered a lion as him.

CHAPTER XVI.

No sooner were his wife and children understood to be permitted residents of Denborough

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Park, than Christopher Grimstone dismissed all care or concern for them, and in the course of the next summer absented himself for some months, accompanied by his brother, without having given any intimation of his absence to his wife or even to old Milly. Day after day, week after week, they were expected, and yet they came not; and Milly resented extremely the omission of his usual confidence in her. Whither he was gone no one knew; and though Peggy shed tears about him many a time in the day, and watered her pillow with tears at night, yet she was not as one who refused to be comforted. The hours went cheerfully on when Julia came in and talked with her, and Peggy felt as if she could not be miserable; and when Milly wrought up into a pitch of vehement indignation against Christopher for his neglect of her and the children, and in suspicion of the profligate life he was even now leading, Peggy defended him and invented excuses for him — excuses which her own heart could not accept.

All this time Julia's strength was wearing away; and though her spirits found relief in the interest her heart took in the unsophisticated and

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innocent Peggy and her children, she became every day more assured of her declining health. But she was now no longer without a sympathising anxious eye to regard her, or a friendly voice to speak kindly to her. Peggy watched over her as one tender sister might watch over another; her admiration for her and her humble love were without bounds. Julia's gentle manners, her refinement of taste and sentiment,—and above all, her piety,—were deeply felt by her, and had a marked influence upon her. Julia could not but see the gradual change which was wrought in her manners and feelings, and her heart bled for her. She was doomed, she foresaw, to be even a more unhappy victim than the former Lady Grimstone had been, inasmuch as Christopher was many grades more debased than his father. Other trials, too, Julia could foresee for this loving, gentle-hearted woman: the fierce, indomitable spirit of the eldest child, self-willed as he was and with but weak affections, would strengthen with his strength and grow with his growth into a character, aided by paternal example, which would be a thorn in his mother's side; while little Amy, all love, all gentleness, with knowledge and

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thought far beyond her years, was too good, too pure to live ;—or if life were spared her,—which her feeble health as much as the angelic purity of her spirit hardly promised,—what would not be the pains and humiliations which she must endure ! Peggy's soul was wrapped up in this child : she loved her with a passionate love that had no words to express itself in ; she loved her all the better too for the affection Julia showed towards her,—and to Julia the child was as a daughter. These new sources of interest and affection, though they brought with them their anxieties, did not fail to make Julia's time pass much more happily than it ever had done since the death of her mother : she daily met eyes that beamed upon her with affection ; and the consciousness of conferring happiness upon some living thing, it matters not how humble, brings with it a rich and abundant reward.

All this time we have said but little of Walter Constable or of Bernard. In these passing years, Julia had received several letters from Bernard,—letters they were full of unabated affection, but unsatisfactory, because they filled her with undefined anxieties. They breathed, spite of their assumed cheerfulness, a tone of melancholy resigna-

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tion, that persuaded her he was enduring, she knew not what, of privation, hardship, or suffering, and they never furnished her with the means of communicating with him. Still, as long as he wrote, she knew he was alive—and that in itself was some consolation. The letters, however, which she of late had received from Mr. Constable were of increasing satisfaction: the tide of fortune was turning with him; and now, in the autumn of the year at which we are arrived, after melancholy residences in Vienna, Rome, Constantinople, Smyrna, and a journey to Egypt, he was looking forward to a permanent return to London, with full ability to visit Westow at his will, and also to fulfil his engagements with Julia. It was a joyous letter—a letter that spoke as Walter used to talk; and Julia, as she read it, forgot the intervening melancholy years, and was transported back to the old summer-house. The letter added that Mrs. Constable also, who had refused to leave the Continent while her son's prospects were uncertain, was beginning now to look forward to her return to Westow; and preparations were already making, through the agent who had managed their affairs during their absence, for her return. All this was like a

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blessed streaming in of daylight to the eyes of the captive. She read and read the letter again, shed abundant tears of joy, and then falling upon her knees—she had no benign and beautiful Madonna to address now — returned thanks to Heaven.

It was many and many a month now since Julia had been so far as the old summer-house; but in the gladness of the precious memories which this letter restored, and in the strength of its joyful tidings, she set forth, taking little Amy by the hand, that she might look down upon Westow,—dear, happy Westow! which was so soon to receive back its true inmates.

"O that Bernard could but be with me—could but know these happy events!" sighed she as she went along.

It was a fine breezy morning late in October; and little Amy now skipped on before her, catching the threads of gossamer, that, shining like silver in the sun, floated lightly in the air, or were carried on by a passing gale; and then gathered her little hand full of the most fairy-like of flowers, the graceful and slender harebell, appealing to Julia with her sweet cheerful voice to admire

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them with her. But Julia was silent and disinclined for talk, and the child then walked on demurely and mutely by her side, occupying herself with her own pleasant little fancies. Julia was thinking deeply; perhaps it was the only time she had ever been with this dear child and wholly disregarded her. Her thoughts, joyful when she set out, became, as she went on, insensibly full of heaviness. Her decreased—nay, almost utterly failing strength was made painfully sensible to her long before she reached the brow of the hill. How different was it when she had bounded thither with an elasticity of step, totally unconscious of fatigue, five years ago! Yes, indeed it was five years since that evening in October when she went there to meet Walter Constable on the eve of his departure. She remembered how, though it was to part from him, she had ascended these slopes unconscious of effort with the free-footedness of a young deer:—now, when it was to look down upon the home which was so shortly to receive him—perhaps to receive her—she crept on with feeble steps, beating heart, and a general debility of frame! Julia felt that death was before her; the long hoped-

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for happiness which a union with Walter Constable would bring might never be hers—and O the painful knowledge which thus awaited *him!* for she had jealously avoided hinting of her melancholy forebodings, or of her failing health, that she might not add one uneasiness to his anxious life abroad. She had hitherto hoped, or tried to hope, that it was but the solitary unhappiness of her lot that filled her spirit with gloom, and even depressed her physical frame; but she could not now deceive herself. By the time she reached the summer-house, she was completely exhausted and sank down powerless upon the threshold. All that poor Amy could do for her she did; she supported her head upon her knees, kissed her, and gently rubbed her temples, as she remembered to have seen Julia do when her mother had fainted.

"Bless you, my child!" said Julia, opening her eyes, and seeing the distressed face of the little Amy looking down upon her; "I am better—nay, I am well," continued she, raising herself and kissing Amy tenderly.

"Oh, I thought you were dead!" exclaimed Amy, bursting into tears.

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Julia exerted herself to the utmost, smiled, and strove to pacify the child.

"Oh, aunt," again she said, scarcely able to speak for weeping, "I thought you were dead! and I dream so often that you are dead! Do not die; for mother says, if you die, I shall not see you again!"

"Oh yes, my dearest one!" said Julia, mingling her tears with the child's; "you will come to me in Heaven; you are kind and gentle and obedient, and such go to Heaven!"

"Yes, mother says so," replied Amy; "and she says sometimes that you will die, and it makes her cry sadly; and I mean to die when you do—but I do not want to leave mother and the baby yet!" And poor Amy wept again as if her heart would break.

Julia was deeply impressed by her words, and by the intimation thus given of Peggy's fears respecting her—according as they did with her own melancholy forebodings; and though she would fain have made light of it to soothe the child, she felt incapable of trifling with a subject awful in itself, or of belying her own feelings. The two sat silently together side by side, each ponder-

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ing on death, bound to the earth by strong affections, and desiring life, if so might be the will of Heaven. Two beautiful beings were they, and pure as angels, though the world's disesteem lay heavy upon them.

Julia, at length, reproaching herself for allowing the spirit of the child to be gloomed with thoughts so unnatural to her years, assumed a cheerfulness which she did not feel, and began to point out to her the decayed paintings on the walls and ceiling, which had once been frescoes of no inconsiderable merit; and to speak of what she herself had been told in her childhood of the singular history of the former possessors of Denborough Park, with whom this summer-house had been a favourite resort, though it was now but one of a thousand tokens of magnificence that belonged to those days. There was a strange fascinating interest to Julia's mind in the traditions of those times: the fame of Jane Ashenhurst's beauty—her mother's pride and its fearful punishment, and the dark mysterious nabob, whose memory continued to haunt the hall like a spectre;—these had been stories to which Julia and Bernard had listened with thrilling regard, and they had deeply im-

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pressed themselves on both their imaginations. It was many a day now since Julia had talked of them: in their younger days, she and Bernard were never weary of them, and it was the most favourite of all their plays to act the nabob and the ladies. Julia told Amy all this.

"Ah!" said Amy, who had listened with her sweet lips apart, and her dark large eye fixed on her aunt with intense interest, "then all is true that old Milly says!"

"And what does Milly say, dearest?"

"She says," replied Amy, drawing closer, "that she would not for the world go into many of the chambers; and that an old man with a long beard walks o' nights; and that there is a lady so beautiful, and yet so dark, that comes now and then, with a baby in her arms."

All this Julia had heard in her childhood,—it was one of the traditions of the house. "And anything more?" asked she, for she had heard much beside.

"Oh yes," said Amy, shuddering: "all about the proud lady; and how the nabob was chained in his coffin, and how he used to torture himself every day. I heard old Daniel Neal, that

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comes now and then, talking to Milly, and he said he knew all about it; and Milly says she can hear groans plain enough as soon as the clock strikes twelve at-night. And, oh! aunt, how old Daniel must be if he can remember such things!"

Julia was sorry to find that one with so excitable a mind as Amy had heard so much, and blamed herself for having perhaps given force to these impressions by this very conversation.

"Oh! my love," said she, "you must not believe such tales as these. The house is large, and the rooms gloomy, but no beings worse than ourselves inhabit them. I have lived in it longer than Milly, and never saw either the old manor the lady. The wind blows down the wide chimneys at night, and sounds hollow. I have heard this myself; but any spectral groans I never did. You must believe what I tell you, dearest Amy."

"Yes, aunt, yes," replied she; "but you are so good. Milly says they come to frighten wicked people: she says Sir Harbottle hears them as well as she does! And she says," continued Amy with great animation, "that there is such money in the house, and that she has seen crowns

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and rings, and such beautiful jewels !—and *Milly* has a deal of money !"

"Has she !" exclaimed Julia, reverting instantly to her own suspicions of the old woman. "But she does not give this money to your mother ?" asked she, hoping not to receive an affirmative answer.

"No ; but I have seen her give a deal of money to my father," said Amy in perfect simplicity.

Julia determined to ask no more. Whatever poor Amy knew was to her innocence,—it burdened not her soul with knowledge of sin. Julia wanted to know no more ; and rising hastily, she took Amy's hand, and led her out, saying—

"There is an old house below this wood ; let us look for it."

Julia was alarmed to find, as she attempted to move, how feeble and exhausted she was. They reached, however, the height of the ascent whence Westow was formerly visible ; but the plantation had grown so much since she had been there last, that although some of the trees had already lost their leaves, the house was completely concealed : they must go yet further on before

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they could obtain the view. Julia hesitated for a moment, whether it would not be wiser to return home than to add, even though it might be but a few hundred yards, to the walk; but her heart urged her onward. "Oh! to see Westow once again, perhaps for the last time, and she within so short a distance of it! Yes, she must see it; it would be a sight to do her good!"

The top of the hill, however, for a considerable distance entirely shut out the view, and they had to go, on and on, a full half-mile farther before she could obtain a free view below. At length, she stood upon the very promontory of the ridge. The woods shelved down with a sudden descent, and Westow lay immediately below her. She looked down, as it were, upon the very roof of the house, with its broad leads and its tall turreted porch; and the first object that she saw, was the smoke cheerfully ascending from four out of its six chimneys. The shutters, too, were opened; the casements stood wide; and two men were busied in the garden.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Julia, forgetful of fatigue; or, if conscious of it, feeling abundantly recompensed by the sight for even greater fa-

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tigue than she had endured: "O that Bernard could but see it with me!" She felt as if she could not satisfy her eyes with looking on these happy tokens of the restored prosperity of the Constables; and little Amy, in her thoughtfulness, had to remind her that they were a long way from home before she thought of returning.

A weary and painful return was that; and Julia's spirits, as well as her strength, were completely exhausted before she reached the Hall. Through the night she could not sleep: an indescribable apprehension of she knew not what of horror and grief lay on her spirit; every sound startled her, — she seemed to see phantoms in the darkness, and the very silence itself appalled her. It was a miserable night; and though towards morning she slept, she woke unrefreshed and feeble. The two succeeding nights were the same, and on the third day she found herself unable to rise. She knew she was ill, but how was she to obtain medical aid? Father Cradock was dead: for Father Cradock, who had been possessed of considerable skill in medicine, had acted as physician of the family, excepting in the extraordinary

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case of Lady Grimstone's illness, when a medical man was called in a few weeks before her death. Sir Harbottle, robust himself,—and, in fact, priding himself on never having taken a drachm of physic in his life, had no sympathies for invalids. His wife's chamber he but very rarely visited: all illness, he maintained, originated in people not being employed. "Get up betime, work hard, and eat a hearty dinner," said he to all complaints, "and you will soon be better!" Julia could have done none of these, and therefore she was obliged to throw herself on the tender mercies of old Milly; although she had anything but a favourable opinion of her, believing her an artful woman, in some way or other bound to serve her brother Christopher, and sent there by him, as she suspected, to serve his own ends. But Julia had no other resource, since Peggy was forbidden to enter the house, and therefore she submitted.

"Ay dear-a-me!" said Milly, when she saw and heard how seriously indisposed Julia was; "but we mun have a doctor. You munna be lost for want of help! I'll go and hear what

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th' ould master says." And Milly, without ceremony, entered Sir Harbottle's room, and demanded medical aid for his daughter.

Milly, however, had come in an evil hour. Poor Sir Harbottle had fretted his soul with the consternation of a discovery he had just made, and had dragged off the forty-years'-old carpet from half the floor, to examine the condition of his surbase. Milly was half stifled with dust as she entered, and looked round the room for a second before she discerned through its thick atmosphere Sir Harbottle down on his knees before a suspicious hole in the floor.

"Oh, Lord!" said Milly, "what 's your honour after?"

"It is a strange thing!" said Sir Harbottle, grubbing down in the hole like a terrier after vermin,—"It is a strange thing. But shut the door, woman!"

Milly did so, and then looked on. "Have you lost owt?" asked she presently, as Sir Harbottle still kept groping downward, first with two fingers, and then with three.

"Lost anything!" repeated he; "I 've lost a deal! It is a strange thing that rats should come

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here, where there 's neither candle-ends nor cheese-parings. And look here," said he, rising from the floor, and shoving down his coat, which hitched up at the shoulders,—" look you here !" And by laying her face close to the wall, as Sir Harbottle did, she discovered a hole the size of a man's hand at the back of the escritoir, which he had loosened from the wall, and in the wall itself a corresponding hole.

" Ay, they are rats sure enough !" said Milly; " the varmint ! they dearly love paper."

" And something beside paper !" said Sir Harbottle fiercely.

" Well now, only think," said Milly, without seeming to understand his words; " how do you ever think all this rubbage can be got out, and these things sided, and only one pair of hands; and miss so badly as her is !"

" I tell you what," said Sir Harbottle, " I 've missed money; and if I did not strongly suspect rats myself, I 'd have you all searched, that I would—every one of you !"

" Ay, for sartain they are rats," replied she; " I hear 'em scratting at my bed's head like so many moudiwarps; and o' summer mornings I 've

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seen the mice weshing their faces on my pillow—the impudent huzzies! It 's a great gayshous place, your honour.—But come, sir, we mun have a doctor for Miss Julia!"

"What 's amiss with her?"

"Ay dear-a-dear, sir, she 's clean going in a waste: can't sleep never a wink o' nights; falls into faints every now and then; can't eat as much as a sparrow, and is as weak as a cat!"

"She sat at table with me yesterday," said the hard voice of Sir Harbottle.

"But she ate nout!" replied Milly. "What 's the use of sitting at table if a body can't eat? We mun have a doctor."

"I 'll have no doctors," said he,—"I 'll not have my pocket picked with doctors; and so you know my mind—a set of lazy vermin! I 've plague enough with the rats, without giving my money to doctors!" and poor Sir Harbottle again began to examine his floor. "Look here," said he, weighing with his heavy foot upon the broken board, "I must have a new floor; and deal-boards are raised a halfpenny a foot! Harkye, woman, I 've lost somehow about nine hundred pounds—part Bank of England bills, and part gold—no

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trifle that; and now you come here wanting a doctor!"

"Well, sir, she's your own daughter,—she's none of mine," said Milly.

"Begone with you!" said Sir Harbottle, growing angry. "After the losses I have had, it is as well not to have too many people in my room!"

"And what's to be done for Miss Julia?" asked the old woman, feeling herself compelled tc decamp.

"Make her plenty of kitchen physic," returned he, driving her on step by step to the door. "No good comes of giving fees to doctors; it's what I neither can do, nor will do! There's more virtue in a slice of beef and a penny loaf, than in all the doctor's stuff in ten parishes. Make her kitchen physic, and she'll soon be better."

"And who, pray ye, is to wait on her, I should like to know?" asked Milly. "It's no sham badliness; and her wants looking after night and day, and who's to do it? for it's more than I'll undertake,—I've enough work o' my own, believe me!"

"The woman in the yard can come in and

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nurse her," said Sir Harbottle; "there is no sense in her being kept to do nothing!"

Milly shrugged her shoulders as she heard the miser's bolts drawn after her, and laughed as she repeated "the rats!"

Julia was grateful beyond measure to be allowed the attendance of Peggy, and to have the little Amy seated by her chair or her bed. It was cheering to hear the low sweet voice of the gentle child singing or talking soothingly; it was cheering to know her present even when profoundly silent she watched beside her, never so happy as when employed in her service. Melancholy though those days and nights of sickness were, they were not altogether sad: Julia was conscious of affection—the most patient, unwearied, devoted affection, both of poor little Amy and her gentle-hearted mother. Her own soul, too, overflowed with love to all. Her affection for Walter Constable, chastened as it had been, grew yet more deep and holy; and for Bernard her love seemed surpassing,—as if a union of spirit were taking place between them; as if they were even now drawing nearer and nearer to a joyful and eternal communion. She seemed already sensible of some mysterious spiritual intercourse

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with him, which was all love, all peace, all joy! —An absorbing ecstasy of affection filled her spirit, and her pale countenance was irradiated by it as if it had been the face of an angel. Sweet Amy looked at her in silent reverence, her own little heart kindled into a yet warmer glow of love; and Peggy stole in and out of the room like a ministering spirit, feeling a sentiment more like veneration than love: in her eyes Julia was almost divine.

CHAPTER XVII.

At the very time Julia walked with little Amy to the hill-top to get a sight of Westow, the Constables arrived in London. Walter's engagements were diplomatic; a brilliant future had opened before him, and his mother was again to all appearance a happy woman;—but she was not, like her son, capable of forgetting the difficulties and hardships of the last five years. Walter thought that his present greatness and future prospects were cheaply purchased by them: Mrs. Constable, with a sigh, thought that his prosperity had been dearly bought.

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"Thank God," she would say, "you are at length worthily employed! This is the life I have coveted for you,—an honourable life; but you have had a sore up-hill tug."

"I shall be the better for it all my days," he would cheerfully reply: "such a breaking-in as this will do me good—has done me good already; it was the very thing I needed."

"Ah, well, the back is mercifully made for the burden. I am thankful for the dawn of prosperity that has opened on you; but I shall carry the effects of the last five years with me to the grave!"

Mrs. Constable would have laid down her life cheerfully for her son: strong to bear and to suffer in the hour of adversity, prosperity threw her back upon a temper somewhat querulous, and a spirit proud, open to prejudices, and tenacious of the world's esteem. No wonder was it, therefore, that with such feelings all her old aversions to the Grimstones remained nothing abated.

Walter had intended to accompany his mother to Westow immediately on their arrival in England; but he soon discovered the design impracticable: two weeks at least must elapse before he

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could leave London. Mrs. Constable, therefore, who was impatient to be again established in her old home, though the season was late and the weather severe, undertook to make the journey without him, escorted thither by the agent, who through their absence had proved himself a faithful steward. This journey was to be performed, be it understood, in the days when the facilities of travel were much less than at present; and a long, weary journey it was. They took the London stage to Lichfield, the nearest town to which such a conveyance came, and thence they proceeded in post-chaises. The last day of the journey was one intensely cold; a black, cheerless November day—a day of all others to make places and objects unsightly: yet with what real satisfaction did the good old lady look through the closed windows of the chaise on the familiar prospect on either hand! She did not compare it with the stately cities and the rich sunny lands she had of late sojourned in, and find it dimmed and darkened by the comparison, as is the fashion of so many travelled persons: on the contrary, to her feelings there was no land on the face of the earth like England; no county throughout

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merry England like the one through which she was travelling; and no home within that county so desirable as her old home of Westow, whither she was now advancing to find it, with all its honours and dignities unshorn, to know that the seed of its master's fortune was sown, and was springing forth to a goodly and honourable growth. Yes! spite of the regrets that would spring up, because she had been an exile from home so long, Mrs. Constable was a happy woman.

Her travelling companion, with praiseworthy delicacy, left her at Wood Leighton, pretending business there, and promising to follow her in the evening. His absence was a great relief; her heart was full of emotion, and since her son was not with her, she desired no other eyes to observe it. As she drove out of Wood Leighton, within less than an hour's drive of Westow, sitting alone in her chaise, she was a happy woman: but when, before long, they came to the road bounded by the line of ancient, lichen-covered park-wall, and she could see at some turn, or from some higher part of the road, the home of the Grimstones, grey and dark, showing neglect even at that distance, annoyances sprang thick

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about her; and she remembered that her dearly-beloved Westow was surrounded by the lands of Denborough Park, and that the inhabitants of Denborough Park were the root of all the evil which had come upon either herself or her son. Poor Mrs. Constable! she was baptizing her spirit with these eternal regrets, when the road swept round, — the park-wall took another direction, and the long, noble avenue opened before her, — its gates standing wide, as if with outspread arms to receive her. At the farther end she saw the tall arched gateway,—and, beyond all, the trim garden, with its spired and ample evergreens before it; the dear old house, with its irregular front, its bay windows, its tall tower-like porch richly escutcheoned with the arms of the Constables, its balustraded roof, high-pointed gables, and chimneys of solid masonry. Mrs. Constable, calm woman as she was, who seldom displayed external emotion, felt a choking sensation come over her, and the unrepressed tears flowed from her eyes, as the chaise with slow motion and deadened sound drove into the gloom of that goodly avenue. It was with a proud delight that she looked onward through the vista,

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and upward to the trees, every one of which had been purchased, she felt, by this painful absence, and by all the anxieties, fears, and bodily pains she had borne through it. None but such as love home with the proud, reverential regard which Mrs. Constable had for Westow, can understand the emotion of this return.

At the door of the house, the ancient and faithful domestic who had remained there in her absence received her. This meeting was that of friend with friend.

"The Lord be praised that I see you well at home again!" said the poor servant, wiping the tears which flowed plentifully with the corner of her apron.

"Thank Heaven!" responded her lady in a low, suppressed voice, feeling overcome by her sensations; and then, seating herself once more in the cushioned armed-chair which stood as it did formerly upon the parlour hearth, she felt the sentiment too deeply in her soul for it to again find utterance in words.

Full of satisfaction as Mrs. Constable's re-establishment at home might be supposed to be, she could not but miss the friend whom death

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had removed during her absence. Father Cradock had been dead a considerable time; and although she was aware of the event, and had mourned it sincerely during her foreign sojourn, the fireside at Westow did not seem right without him. She had again to mourn his loss; she had now to feel of a certainty, that Father Cradock, the long-tried, faithful friend, the ghostly comforter, the cheerful companion, was dead! He had been, even more than her son, her associate at Westow; she could imagine the house without Walter, but not without Father Cradock. His own chair stood by the fire vacant; when the door opened, she looked for him to enter; and even in this hour of fulfilment, both heart and soul were made conscious of wants which only he could have supplied. Mrs. Constable's return to Westow was a practical illustration of the incapability of what the world calls "good fortune" entirely satisfying the human heart.

Having now established Mrs. Constable at home, we must return to her son; who, after having seen his mother off in the stage-coach, strolled carelessly towards his hotel, and in his way passed the shop of Mr. Charles Stevens, one of the

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principal booksellers of the day, and was detained for a moment by the title-page of a political pamphlet which was just then exciting an intense sensation throughout London. Walter stepped in to purchase it, and found the shop crowded with people—men of fashion, men of rank, eager and hot politicians, and loiterers of all descriptions, such as met there constantly to discuss the events of the day, and whatever new lampoon, caricature, or pamphlet the agitation of the time had produced. Now, however, nothing was talked of but this production, so clever, so witty, so true; full of such noble sentiments, such right views, such cutting and annihilating sarcasm, such pure and wonderful eloquence! All joined in extolling it, and all were inquisitive after the author. One great cause of interest connected with it was, that the author, who called himself "Marcus," and who for the last three years had produced a vast number of similar works, all on the passing subjects of the day, in this his latest took leave of his readers, and of the public at large, in one of the most pathetic and eloquent adieus that ever had been written. On all hands were regrets over him. His works, it was said,

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were perused by the cabinet as well as the people at large, and had had no inconsiderable influence upon the sentiments of several influential persons. The author, it was declared, was a made man, would he but reveal his name; and Mr. Stevens, who was likewise the publisher, was importuned to reveal it. This was what Walter Constable gleaned up, as he stood with the pamphlet in his hand, turning over its pages the while, and catching glimpses of its extraordinary style, and of the wonderful force and reach of the author's mind. Mr. Stevens declared himself not at liberty to say who it was; it was a secret he was in honour bound to keep: but report hinted, he said, of a certain noble lord about his majesty's person; and again, of a right reverend bishop: but he could not say which rumour was nearer the truth;—this, however was certain, that the writer was one of the most extraordinary men of the day. All parties agreed in this; and the sapient man of books elevated his eyebrows, folded his arms, and looked very knowing.

Walter listened to what was said with great interest, and then addressed him to the reading of his pamphlet; which soon so completely en-

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grossed his attention, that he took no farther heed of what went forward around him, nor was able to leave it till he had finished with the last words. By that time the crowd was in great measure dispersed, and he himself applied to the master of the shop with the same eager queries that the others had done, expressing at the same time his unbounded admiration of the talent displayed in this production, and still more, a reverence for the right-minded, unflinching principle with which it abounded; and ended by desiring that the whole of this singularly-gifted author's writings might be sent to his address, which he furnished.

Walter was deeply engaged over their pages upon the evening of the next day, when a small packet was brought in for him. He opened it, and, to his extreme astonishment, found it to be from Bernard Grimstone, inclosing three hundred pounds and the following letter:—

"My much-valued and dear Friend,

"What a singular series of providential interpositions has my life been! and how consoling

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is the belief that such has been the case! I will not in this place explain to you what these instances have been, but will now speak of what more nearly concerns yourself.

"After five years I restore to you the sum of which you were impoverished by our family, principally through regard for my beloved sister and myself. Would to God it could have been returned to you earlier—at a time when money was more needful to you than, I thank Heaven, it is at present! I have heard of your success—that you stand high with not less than two crowned heads. May your good fortune be equal to your virtues! may the trials and difficulties you have had to encounter be the only ones your life may experience!

"And now you will naturally require some account of myself—some cause for my so carefully concealing my mode of life and place of abode, and some explanation of the means by which I am enabled to restore you your own. I will give it to you. I am the 'Marcus' with whose name the town rings. I was in Mr. Stevens' shop at the time you were there; but not even Mr.

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Stevens himself knows my name or my history, although he knows me for the author whose writings are enriching him.

"I came to London—let me confess it—with the sin of theft upon my soul! I stole from my father ten guineas to enable me to undertake this journey; and, venial as the world's morality might have held the offence, it was a crushing load of enormity, of self-degradation, which trammelled and galled me worse than a slave's fetters. I did not dare to look an honest man in the face; I could not speak of probity, morality, or any of the virtues of social life, even through my pen; I could not reprobate any of its vices while my conscience accused me of theft! O miserable, miserable time! I came into this vast city a self-condemned wretch. Busy and happy faces surrounded me, but I had neither companion nor friend. I walked alone all day — I passed the night, it matters not how; I regarded myself as the one isolated drop—as the one incongruous particle—in this immense ocean of life, in this great whole of social existence. The traveller in the heart of the Great Desert has a less oppressive sense of solitude upon him than had I in the

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crush and throng of London;—he looks forward to the end of his journey, when he shall be received again into the bosom of society; I could foresee no such termination of my dreary pilgrimage. The necessity which is laid upon man to earn his daily bread, is one of the mercies of God. How fain would I have consorted myself with the handicraft man at his trade, but that, like the unjust steward of the Gospel, "I could not dig!" I therefore applied myself to what I conceived my own vocation; but a paralysis had come over my soul—I could not pour forth my thoughts in words as I had done, and whatever I produced then was feebleness indeed. Many a time I walked into the fields—into the most secluded and beautiful scenes, that I might refresh and comfort my soul with sunshine, green trees, and bubbling waters, fondly persuading myself that it was the unusual circumstances of city-life that warped and deadened my energies; but my brain was dry, the once free-flowing fountains of poetry were sealed. I saw the kindly aspect, I felt the amenities of external nature, but they were as waters poured upon a thirsty desert, which sink into the sands and produce no vegetation!

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"My expenditure was reduced to the lowest possible scale; still my money was diminishing day by day, and at length I had but one shilling left. I was reduced to despair. I could not write, my faculties were all prostrated before my absolute misery. I despised myself. I believed I had over-estimated my powers, or that I was cursed for my crime, and I looked forward to a death by starvation. Yet, my friend, this appalling prospect distressed me far less, as my own personal suffering was concerned, than that I should die without removing the charge of theft from my name.

"It was on the 17th of April—a night never to be forgotten, when I dared not enter under a roof, because I had not wherewith to pay for its shelter,—after I had been four-and-twenty hours without food, and with a brain that ached with the labour of fruitless thought,—that I walked on London Bridge, resolved—yes, my friend, resolved in that desperate misery to cast myself from its walls into the waters below. O what a repose seemed to my spirit to lie under those waters—I wished I was there! My God! I tremble now to recall the horribly calm state of feeling with which I contemplated suicide! 'When it is

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dusk,' I said, 'I will do it;' and I paced backwards and forwards with far more composure of mind than I had ever experienced since I entered London.

"My God, it was of thy mercy that I was preserved from so frightful an offence against Thee—that I was made thy instrument of mercy to another despairing and abandoned soul!

"The clocks of the city had tolled nine; the evening was dusk, and the bridge unusually free of people; my hands were laid on the wall of the bridge with the intention of assisting my spring over; when a sudden shrill cry, and the fall of a heavy body into the water, arrested my attention. It was a woman who had precipitated herself into the river from one of the quays. I saw it done, and instantly forgot my own desperate intention; I thought of nothing but saving her, and the next moment was upon the stairs. I threw off my coat, cast myself into the water, and amid a throng of watermen, and of persons who had congregated on the spot, succeeded in rescuing her.

"The further particulars of that night I need not dwell upon; enough that it was an epoch in

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the history of my life and in the operation of my own mind. The entire self-forgetting—the arousing of my sympathies, and of my mental and physical energies, which it had occasioned, created a new existence within me. The moral atmosphere was cleared by the tempest that had agitated it, and I looked on life and on the purposes of life with new views and better knowledge. The fountains too of my intellectual being were immediately unsealed; the rock had been smitten, and the waters gushed forth plenteously. What a joyful awakening was that! From the inane torpor of my former miserable self, sprang forth sensation, knowledge, aim. I was as the blind man who had received sight; as the lame man who leapt up in renewed strength; as the dead who was raised! The healing hand of the Redeemer's love had been laid upon me, and I was no longer poor and miserable, blind and feeble!

"The young woman whom I had been the instrument of saving was restored to her mother, her only parent, and I became their inmate—I was no longer without friends or without home. Of these good people, however, I cannot stay to say much; nor need I relate the cause of the young

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woman's desperation— hers was a common history. They were in what the world calls the lower class of society, but hearts such as theirs ennoble any class. I boarded myself with them, and inhabited an upper room which they had been accustomed to let to casual lodgers. My first object was now again to obtain the ten guineas of which I had deprived my father; for until that burden was removed from my conscience, I was not free to lay by one farthing for what otherwise was the great business of my life.

"Of course my experience as an author was small; but I wrote for magazines, for newspapers, for every publication of the day. I penned odes, sonnets, songs, and epistles; I wrote short histories and imaginary travels; I essayed my skill in tragedy and comedy. My pen was never idle; and incessant as was my labour, small my remuneration, and many and various my disappointments, nothing could daunt me. My personal expenses were small; I was content to be poor, and to seem so, that I might be able to lay by even from my pitiful gains. Good Heavens! when I look back to those times, when pence even went to swell the slowly-growing amount,

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I am amazed at the undismayed ardour that sustained me!

"At length the time came when I saw the sum completed; and with the exultation of a child, I wept for joy. Oh! my friend, life could not afford me, were it prolonged to the four score years and ten, more perfect fulfilment of peace than I partook then. I felt like Christian when the burden of his iniquity fell from him; and I went out at noon-day, poor as was my appearance, into the very throng of the city,—on to the Exchange; into the parks; down to the palace itself, that I might indulge myself with looking proud, and rich, and honest men in the face! You will smile perhaps at all this, and call it folly; but you know not what it is to rise up from under the agonizing weight of self-accusation, and walk forth in the light and strength of an approving conscience!

"I wrote to my father; I wrote then also to Julia; but I could not give her the full knowledge of my condition, and I kept the place of my residence a secret from her—for I had yet a purpose to accomplish, and I did not venture to receive her regrets, nor even her sympathy, lest

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my purpose might be shaken, or my mind diverted from it.

"In all the events of my life I can trace the interposing hand of Providence; and, oh! what an ennobling, encouraging, preserving consciousness has this been! How could I doubt when I knew that the power of the Almighty Father would uphold me! I had been on the brink of self-destruction, His hand had mercifully held me back; I had been dismayed with the prospect of utter want, He had provided me food; I was homeless, and He gave me a shelter! I saw these things, and blessed Him! Again, it was surely by the Divine interposition that I was led out of the unprofitable track of light ephemeral literature, to which only I had hitherto devoted myself; and the manner of it was thus: I was walking down Whitehall on the evening of one of those remarkable debates which occupied the house three years back;—at the very commencement of these great national agitations which at present interest not only our own country, but Europe also;—when two persons passed me, and the elder of them seeming to glance upon me as he went by, said 'Go to the House of Commons

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to-night, and listen to the debate.' I heard the words distinctly, but supposing them addressed to his companion, took no further heed of them. Shortly afterwards the same persons met me again, and the same words were repeated. I was struck by the repetition, and immediately a desire sprang in my mind to go there. Hitherto I had never been — in fact, I did not commonly care to present myself in public, because of the worn and ill-conditioned state of my wardrobe, and I was in the very act of questioning with myself whether I should follow this momentary impulse, when the person who had so singularly arrested my attention before again came up alone. Whether he actually the third time spoke the words or not, I cannot tell; but so strongly was my mind impressed on seeing him, that, as in a dream, the words seemed spoken, and I involuntarily said, 'I would fain go to the House, but I know not how.' The gentleman stopped, and looked at me as if in surprise, and then said, 'To the House of Commons is it you would go? —come then with me!' I followed him, and, to my surprise, was led into the body of the house. The crowd opened obsequiously before my con-

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ductor, and the best place under the gallery was instantly conceded to me: I saw him immediately afterwards take his seat,—it was the great Edmund Burke.

"A new world was presented to me. The vast importance of these great political questions, their immense influence upon the happiness and social condition of thousands, impressed me at once, and I became a constant attender of every debate; and through the rest of the day, and even the night, I read and studied them profoundly in books. Able as had been the minds that treated on these subjects, I seemed to see many things in new points of view, and felt, or believed I felt, the truth in many an intricate maze in which cunning or ignorance had involved it; and as I pursued out these subjects, day after day with increased avidity, I was amazed at the clearness and strength of my own perceptions. I sat down and wrote; page grew upon page, and at length my first political treatise was finished. My views were widely different from those of old politicians, and I almost trembled at my own audacity; but the more I examined them, the more I was satisfied of their

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soundness; and though I asked myself the humiliating question, 'Is it possible that they are all wrong, and *I* only right!' my internal conviction upheld me, and, assuming the name of 'Marcus,' I ventured to send it to Mr. Stevens for his approbation. He demurred for some time at the startling nature of the sentiments — they were so out of the common way, so unlike what everybody believed; and yet he agreed to publish it, giving me two guineas for the entire copyright, making great merit of this, and talking greatly of the certain risk he was about to incur.

"The work soon attracted the public attention: it was read by all, from the prime minister down to the artisan; the public papers were filled with it, and the name of the author was eagerly demanded. But, before I was by any means aware of its full popularity, Mr. Stevens, with the bearing of a man who is doing an act of benevolence, engaged me in a bond to furnish him with a series of similar essays for the next five years, on the questions of the day, whatever they might be, for each of which he engaged to pay me twenty guineas. For some little time I was ex-

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tremely well satisfied with the engagement; but the necessity there was for me to read the daily papers, soon made me aware of the extent of my popularity, and consequently of the folly of the bargain I had made, or rather of the advantage which had been taken of my inexperience. But it was then too late; and mortified though I was, the interest of the work in which I was engaged bore me up.—In three months afterwards my second essay was published, ten thousand copies of which were sold on the day of publication: it was an unexampled instance of sale. And so I continued to write during the next two years, sometimes with more, sometimes with less success. Mr. Stevens in the mean time was realizing a fortune; and I, with all my assiduity and expense of strength and thought, had laid by but little more than one hundred pounds, although I practised the most rigid economy—nay, almost parsimony. But do not, my friend, believe that during this time I was unhappy—by no means. Setting pecuniary advantages entirely out of the question, the author has a pure, an elevating, a sufficient happiness in the very exercise of his mental powers; the athlete has less positive pleasure in the buoyant use

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of his limbs, than the literary man in the expression of his thoughts on paper. This perhaps was the portion of my literary life which was most filled with positive pleasure; no satiety of mind, no exhaustion of body had yet come on. I sat in my solitary room, small, meanly furnished as it was, in the very midst of a toiling population, and sent forth thoughts and words which kindled a spirit wherever they came, and established themselves into the rallying cry of liberty. Tell me, my friend, was not this a noble prerogative? The necessity there was upon me to lay aside the greater amount of my gains, preserved me from the excitements of personal vanity: I coveted not to be known in my own person as the 'Marcus' whose name was on every tongue. The very men who lauded 'Marcus' most vehemently, passed me by in the streets as one unworthy of their notice, or suffered my words to drop unanswered, if, when we did chance to meet, I ventured a humble sentiment. But in the very height of my popularity, my health began to decline. I had been aware for some time of such indications, and had disregarded them; but at length I could resist them

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no longer. I was visited by long fits of depression; doubts and anxieties took possession of me. The very work which formerly had been as my life's blood to me, became irksome, if not distasteful; the high and splendid views which I had accustomed my mind to contemplate, of the moral regeneration of man, and of the omnipotent nature of truth, seemed commonplace or delusive. My hand trembled, my appetite forsook me, and sleep brought less than no refreshment, for it was filled with harassing and distressful dreams, that fevered and wore me out worse than the waking disquiets of the day. The good woman with whom I lodged compelled me to have a physician; but his prescription was one which I could not adopt,—entire relaxation of mind and body,—nay, if possible, the very absence of thought. Little as I believed myself capable of obedience, I promised it, and dismissed my physician; and, as it was fortunately the summer season, spent the greater part of my days for many weeks in the beautiful country that surrounds the metropolis.

"You may wonder why my employer Mr. Stevens did not seek me out. It was not his fault

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that he did not do so. The truth was, I had a repugnance to have my exact circumstances known to him, and jealously kept from him both my name and residence; he knew me only as 'Marcus,' and saw me only at his own place, for such was my part of the agreement between us.—But to return to the summer of which I was writing. My favourite haunt was in the neighbourhood of Windsor. There is a little churchyard, green and quiet as a land of dreams, where I spent my most happy time—forgetting politics—forgetting the contending, toiling, multitude from whom I had escaped, and throwing my mind back upon memories that consoled and refreshed it. There, too, came back the full gush of poetry which the world and the world's cares had choked up so long. Walter Constable—I was indeed happy! I was, however, violating the prescription of my physician, as I fatally found. But it is not in the power of art to stop the workings of mind: as well chain up the torrent that leaps with headlong fury in wild and beautiful strength from the rock! I knew that I was hastening my own death, but I could not cease to think—nor to

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pour out those feelings, which, whether they had had an outlet or not, must have worn me away.

"The sunset is glorious from the churchyard of Ensfield, and I never witnessed it without the idea of the deathbed of the Christian being present with me. Yes, it was there that I learned to think of death not only with calmness, but with desire; my eternal hopes had their birth in the golden sunset-light of that little churchyard!— My friend, before I proceed let me unfold my wishes to you. It is where the golden stream of sunset falls between the two poplars that I would wish to be buried. Start not at the word! the time is approaching, and the good Providence of God, after enabling me to accomplish the great purpose of my life, has sent you hither to perform the last duties of humanity. Said I not with abundant cause that he had been merciful to me? You are come to close my eyes, and to see me buried in the churchyard of Ensfield!"

Walter Constable, overcome by emotion, laid down the letter when he had read these words, and then started up impatient to hasten to him; but it was then past midnight, and as yet he knew

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not where Bernard was to be found: therefore, again seating himself and taking up the letter, with a heart that would ache, and eyes dimmed with tears, he continued to read.

"Spite of the incessant flow of thought that I indulged through this summer, my bodily strength was in a considerable degree recruited, and with it my former activity of mind returned, and I again found pleasure and interest in public affairs. But before I recommenced my career, I went to Mr. Stevens, who professed himself overjoyed to see me; and doubtless his professions were sincere, for I was the mainspring of his trade. My desire was not in any way to take advantage of him; for, however unfortunate our agreement was for me, I considered it binding; but I represented to him the impaired state of my health,—that I was compelled to overwork myself to live, whilst he was making a fortune at my expense. Mr. Stevens by the reckoning of the world was an honourable man, and he declared himself such over and over again. This is the custom of many persons when they have a design of over-reaching another: I learned to know him well in the three years of my dealings with him. The

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result of this interview was, however, to my advantage. He agreed to give me fifty pounds for whatever I might produce, provided it ran to a certain number of pages, instead of twenty as heretofore; and beyond this, offered to purchase the secret of my true name for fifty more. But this, great as was the temptation, I resolutely refused; and henceforth Mr. Stevens pretended to consider me, not as the real 'Marcus,' but as his agent, and gave it out, by hints and innuendoes, that 'Marcus' was not of lower rank than an earl, and as much higher as people chose to conjecture. With one part of the public the bait took; Marcus was more in fashion than ever. The design of this was to pique me to the disclosure of my secret; but it had a contrary effect, —I guarded it more carefully than before: it was my revenge, and I hope not a sinful one, upon Mr. Stevens for the Shylock-like measure that he dealt out to me.

"The town had now been a long time without a 'Marcus,' as those works came to be styled; and Mr. Stevens was proportionably impatient for me to produce one. My next appeared at Christmas, and was the most successful of

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any I had written; and my fund being increased one half at once, I too was satisfied. But these works could not now be written with impunity—my former indisposition returned, and another long pause succeeded ere I again appeared before the public. During this time I one day called on Mr. Stevens: a gentleman was talking with him, and as they appeared in confidential discourse, I turned to leave the shop. 'Mr. Marcus,' said the publisher, stepping aside to me, 'you must not go;' and then he introduced me to the gentleman as one in the confidence of Marcus, without mentioning to me the name of the person to whom I was introduced. The gentleman held out his hand, and saluted me most cordially; and then, withdrawing me into an inner room, and motioning to Mr. Stevens, much to his visible chagrin, to keep back, empowered me in no equivocal terms to state to my friend Marcus, that such and such noblemen, whom he named, were desirous of serving me. 'How?' said I, astonished—for these were the very advocates of the oppressions and malversations against which I had been warring. 'They would be most happy,' replied the stranger, 'to induct

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him into the church, or to provide him an official appointment abroad—highly lucrative—provided the works which appear under his name might be discontinued.'—'Marcus is poor,' I returned with an indignation I could not restrain, 'but he will not be bribed to silence!'—'Sir,' resumed the gentleman, not apparently displeased by my warmth, 'Marcus may take time to consider this offer; but he must not go on at this rate! Good God! he will overturn all the old institutions,' said he, kindling up; 'he will teach the rabble to think! Marcus may rise to what height he chooses in the church: let him make his own terms, so that he keeps silence, or, what is better, employs his pen on the other side.'—'No, sir,' I returned, 'Marcus, though poor—though wearing a coat threadbare as this, cannot sell his principles!'—'Then Marcus is a fool!' was his reply. 'And yet,' continued he, softening the tone with which he had spoken, 'my employers would not pardon me losing you thus lightly. Consider, sir, Mr. ——, and ——, and ——, all our most distinguished writers, have been purchased, or are secured by pensions. Marcus must not rate himself as more immaculate than these men!'—'Go

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back,' I said, roused by these taunts of the tempter, 'and tell your employers that there is one honest man in London who will not sell the great cause of God and of his fellow-creatures for a mess of pottage!' And without staying to hear his further remarks, I went out hastily.

"A few days afterwards I met Mr. Stevens in the street. He looked extremely angry, and with an oath demanded why I had insulted Sir James —— in his shop; for that several noble persons, whom he named, and with whom Sir James were connected, were patrons of his own, and that they would now never come near his place;—that I had done him irreparable mischief, and it would have been better for him that he had never known me than that I had done thus. I then briefly related to him, with some little retaliation on my side, the object of Sir James ——'s mission; and that, had I acceded to his proposals, 'Marcus' would have been no more, and consequently *his* own profits at an end: that I had evidently, in adhering to my principles, lost an advantage for myself; but that his interests were secured by it. Mr. Stevens was amazed at what he heard, begged my forgiveness for his haste, and, in the

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excess of his civility, voluntarily offered me one hundred pounds for the next work I would produce, provided it were immediate.

"It was at the very moment of an important crisis, and the work was written in a few days. I was abundantly thankful, for my hoarded gains were growing apace—and this seemed again like the hand of Providence rewarding me for my adherence to the right. I had now two hundred and fifty pounds laid by; for in the intervals between my larger efforts I produced many small things which amply supplied my expenditure.

"Unfortunately the sale of this work was much less than usual—perhaps it was designed to keep me humble,—but the work went off heavily, and Mr. Stevens treated me with so great coolness that I very rarely went near him. It was at the commencement of this present year; and what with discouragement from him, the daily wearing away of my strength, and the consequent depression of spirit that accompanied it, the summer wore on gloomily: I was unable, as formerly, to reach even the nearest fields. The summer went on, and I saw neither trees nor running waters. O the insatiable yearning that filled my spirit

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for the sights and sounds of Nature! The good woman with whom I lodged,—a Samaritan in soul, though poor, and winning her daily bread with hard labour,—often brought me flowers—fresh field-flowers, which she purchased out of her own small earnings; and not a Sunday came, but her daughter went out purposely into the country many miles to bring me home as many as she could gather. The love of flowers was to me as an appetite; I felt as if I must die if it could not be indulged; and though I many a time bathed them with my tears, those very tears were an infinite relief. Ah! my friend, let me pass over that season of impatient weakness, when the earth from which I was departing seemed to be so desirable—when I wished with passionate longings for the wings of the dove, so that I might flee away and cast myself down under the shadow of trees, or upon the breezy tops of mountains, and pour into the bosom of the great genial Mother the unparticipated woes and anguish of my spirit!—when not only the beauty of the physical world but of our moral and intellectual nature, was so clearly revealed, and an unappeasable cry was in my soul for companionship—

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for the interchange of affection! But it is past! I go where the fulness of love shall satisfy the heart — where the very springs of intellectual being have their birth!

"The physician whom I had formerly consulted, I again called in towards autumn; but he gave me now no hope. This was, however, no surprise to me; and as I accustomed myself to the daily—nay, hourly contemplation of death, and as the duller, darker days of the year advanced, when I was no longer excited by sunshine, clear skies, and the voice of birds, which I could not go forth to enjoy, a calmer state of feeling succeeded, and my only prayer was to be enabled to make up the three hundred pounds, of which I still wanted fifty.

"The comparative failure of my last production had so far discouraged me, that I felt aversion to the thought of further authorship; and as I had not had courage through the whole of the summer to read a single newspaper, I was so far behind the present time, that this was still another impediment in my way. At length one day, when I was in better spirits, I took a hackney-coach, for I was no longer able to walk, and presented myself

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before Mr. Stevens. He appeared much shocked at my altered appearance, and received me with extraordinary kindness, volunteering me the help of money, physicians, his country-house, his carriage,—in short, whatever he possessed. I was much amazed; but glancing my eye upon my last production, which still lay about, all the mystery was solved by my reading the words 'fourth edition' upon the title-page. 'Ha,' said he, seeing my eye had caught the fact, 'the thing went off after all! And,' said he reproachfully, 'you have lost you know not what by your obstinately keeping me ignorant of your abode. Mr. Burke called to inquire after 'Marcus,' with very significant glances: it is a thousand pities you did not confide your name to me!' I could not feel sure, notwithstanding Mr. Stevens' show of candour and regret, whether he would willingly have given up my address had he known it: I suspected not, and therefore I did not overwhelm him with gratitude. Still, indifferent as I appeared to him, I will not deny that what he told me was extremely gratifying; and I even for some time contemplated making myself known to Mr. Burke, who had been in truth so singularly the instru-

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ment of turning my mind to public affairs. But as the fever of self-gratulation subsided, my desire for personal distinction subsided also, and I set about the work which I too well knew would be my last; I disregarded my bodily weakness, and applied myself with unremitting diligence to regain the time I had let slip. My work was finished—it was by far the shortest I had ever written, and attained but the size of a pamphlet. Whilst it was printing, I wrote that farewell to the public, which it appears has given it even more signal success. I received fifty pounds for it. And, which was another proof of the signal mercy that cared for me in so remarkable a manner, on the same day I received another fifty from some unknown hand: it came to me in an envelope, containing these words,—'For the use of Marcus.' Thus, after restoring you your own, I have more than sufficient left for my own remaining wants.

"Many have been the providences which have marked my pilgrimage—the last not the least. I was sitting yesterday morning, considering with myself how the money would best be conveyed to you—for I still supposed you abroad,—when an im-

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pression came strongly upon me that I must go to Mr. Stevens. Why I should go there, I could not tell; I was not in the habit of seeing him except on matters of business, and such a suggestion had no connexion whatever with my thoughts. I endeavoured to dismiss it; but it had taken possession of my mind so strongly, that it was not to be put aside, and, in obedience to the strange mission, I ordered a hackney-coach, and was driven there. Mr. Stevens was surprised to see me, and with the greatest consideration placed me beside his own desk, where, he said, unseen by the crowd who were thronging the place, I might have the pleasure of hearing what was said of 'Marcus'. This, I doubt not, he supposed to be the object of my coming. I had not been long there when your voice attracted me, but I was too much agitated to acknowledge you. I saw again the merciful hand of the Almighty extended for me; and I was about to rise and request an interview with you in the inner room, when you voluntarily furnished your own address. I regarded it as the Divine will that our meeting should not then take place, and returned to my own lodgings to address you thus.

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"This has been painfully and wearily written, but I owed this information both to you and to my beloved sister. My work is now done; the blessing of the Heavenly Father has been with me—He has crowned me with success; and now, though young in years, I fold my arms in peace and await my hour, assured that the accomplishment of hopes and desires, which I once indulged, will be granted me in the land whither I am hastening.

"Farewell! May the God of peace, the God of love, the Universal Father, watch over you and bless you!—This will be the latest prayer of yours,

"My dear friend, most faithfully,

"BERNARD GRIMSTONE.

"No. 7, —— Court, —— Street, Nov. 4th."

It may be imagined, but it cannot be told, what were the sensations with which Walter Constable closed this letter.

"O noblest being," exclaimed he, "richly and nobly endowed as thou wert, thou hast sold thy life to redeem the honour of thy house!"

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CHAPTER XVIII.

"Is your name Constable?" asked a meek-browed young woman, opening the door of No. 7, —— Court, at which Walter presented himself by eight o'clock the next morning. "It is!" he replied, concluding instantly that she was the unfortunate young woman of whom Bernard had spoken.

"He expected you," she said, bringing him in and offering him a chair: "sit down, sir, for a minute, and I will let him know that you are here."

Walter glanced round the room. It was meanly furnished, but scrupulously clean: the people were evidently sacking-bag makers, for work of this description lay on the floor, and, early as it then was, the young woman had been busied at it that very morning. The upper room of this poor habitation was the abode of that Marcus whose name the rich and great were curious to learn, and whose writings were known and honoured, not only through London, but through the whole extent of the island. Walter thought of Sir Harbottle,

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and of the useless abundance which surrounded him, and wished he could have been brought hither to feel the lesson which this scene might have taught him. His thoughts, however, were interrupted by the sounds which proceeded from above,—the hoarse, hollow voice of a consumptive patient, and then the deep distressing cough. He could not control the emotion which these but too intelligible tokens gave rise to, and he reproached himself as being the innocent means of this noble being's sufferings. Again all was silent above; and then an elderly woman descended the stairs, and with quivering lip and eyes full of tears, without speaking one word to him, but with a most melancholy shake of the head, motioned him to ascend to the chamber. Walter repressed his feelings that he might meet his friend cheerfully, and obeyed her: the young woman left the chamber as he entered.

Prepared as Walter was for the change in Bernard's appearance, it was even greater than he expected. He was wrapped in a cloak, and reclined in a large chair, pale and shadow-like, evidently in the last stage of consumption,—bald, and already grey. The expression of cheerful

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greeting with which Walter had entered the chamber vanished at the first sight of Bernard; his soul melted into an unutterable anguish of sympathy, and without attempting to speak, he grasped his hand, turned his face aside, and wept. Bernard was not less affected, and several minutes elapsed before the silence was broken. "Sit down beside me, my kind friend," at length said Bernard; and then, after a considerable pause, he asked, "Have you read my letter?"

"I have," replied Walter, compelling himself into calmness; "and my admiration—my almost reverence of you is unbounded! I cannot reproach *you* for this self-sacrifice; but myself I do. I have been the means of shortening your noble career. O that I could purchase your life at the price of my own success!"

"Peace, peace, my friend," said Bernard, speaking with difficulty: "it is not to talk of these things that you are now come! Do not regret me: life is but desirable, is but valuable, inasmuch as every duty it involves is accomplished. Were mine to be prolonged to the most extended date, I might not be as fully prepared to resign it as now! No, no, my hour is come!

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One by one, the links which held me fast are dissolved. Even to my sister, heavenly-minded as she is, my heart no longer clings with the agony of love which once oppressed it. Had you any belief in spiritual influences," said he, half raising himself in his chair, and speaking with greater animation, "I could tell you of mysterious but blessed communion, that has been as the ministering of angels; but you were always a sceptic!" and a smile of playful reproof, such as was common to him in former days, passed over his features. He sank back into his chair, and then again spoke with deliberation and difficulty. "You will supply to Julia what I might have been, — my place will not be vacant. You weep, my friend;—ah! well, our human nature is weak!" A long pause succeeded these words, and then Bernard, as if pursuing the train of his own thoughts, said in a low and impressive voice, as if unconscious of the presence of any one: "Oh! my Father, except for thy everlasting love, I had bowed down in the bitterness of despair; but thou didst uphold me, thou didst pour into my bruised heart the oil and wine of thy consolations! I bless thee, my

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God, I bless thee!" Bernard throughout had spoken with difficulty, and now the cough interrupted his further utterance. It was a long and distressing fit, and then he sank exhausted upon the bosom of his friend. Walter heard again the ineffectual voice attempting to speak; he felt his hand grasped,—a deep sigh was heaved,—the breath fluttered, and then the head sank down heavily. His eye was fixed the whole time upon the countenance; a smile was upon the lips, a heavenly expression upon the brow; but the pure and noble spirit had departed for ever!

What need to say more? Walter Constable closed his eyes, and saw him buried, as he had desired, in the beautiful churchyard of Ensfield. The vast mass of his papers he found arranged and confided to his care, together with instructions respecting what little property remained after his decease; which, with upwards of twenty pounds in money, he had bequeathed to the good people with whom he lodged.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Mrs. Constable had returned, as we have said, with her aversion to the Grimstones nothing abated; and though it had been her intention to drive up to Denborough Park "some day soon," yet day after day had gone on, and the visit was unpaid. The weather was so winterly, she argued with herself; and after her long journey, it was such a luxury to be quiet—to sit down for the day, and feel that there was no necessity to cross the threshold. Besides all this, there were many domestic arrangements that must be attended to before her son's return: there were hangings to put up, and carpets to lay down; and the works she had found leisure to do even in the unquiet times of her foreign sojourn, to be fitted to furniture and particular places for which they had been designed;—and this was found too large, and required making less; and that too small, and had to be made larger. Nobody knew what a vast deal Mrs. Constable found to do;—the exertion of her journey was nothing to the exertion she used on these first

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days of her return. And then, besides all this, the much-thought-of and elaborate counterpane, which she had finished among the good Ursuline nuns at Bruges, was to be examined; and the examination excited a desire to do divers other things to match it; and they had to be devised and begun; so that if Mrs. Constable left her bed with the sincerest intention in the world to drive to Denborough Park on that one day, it was sure to be too late before she had got through the multifarious concerns that presented themselves. Seven days thus went on, and the severity of Julia's indisposition was past, when Mrs. Constable received from her son a letter, briefly relating what has occupied the two last chapters.

Strong as were Mrs. Constable's prejudices, her heart was placable, and the surest key to it was attention or regard exhibited in any way towards her son; consequently, this self-sacrifice of poor Bernard's melted her down into the most relenting of moods. The sins of the Grimstones were no longer remembered. On the contrary, she recalled to mind her early friendship with Lady Grimstone, when all the sorrows of that unhappy woman were poured into her own breast. She

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remembered Julia, the beautiful and joyous-hearted girl, the most dutiful of daughters; and Bernard, the young visionary. His friendship for her son, his quiet visits to Westow, and all the hard judgments which, even against her own better feeling, she had pronounced upon him, came before her. Then she thought of his early death, a martyr to high principle, and her heart was filled with uneasy self-reproach; and though she was in the most interesting crisis of a new pattern of knitting, without stopping to see what it would turn out, she ordered her ancient and long-disused barouche to be got ready, and, apparelling herself in an ample furred travelling cloak and hood, she stood prepared to go forth, upon a morning of driving snow, a full half-hour before the vehicle itself came up to the door. The old housekeeper, full of amazement, wondered "what, for sure, madam could mean by going out on a day like this!"

Mrs. Constable knew nothing of the misunderstanding between Sir Harbottle and her son. She supposed him to be the lover of Julia, acknowledged and accepted by all the family; and though Walter, on this her return, had not expressed

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a wish that she should visit Julia, she took it for granted that it was from knowing her disapprobation of the family; but she flattered herself that her doing so would not only be gratifying to him, but was the highest compliment she could pay him.

Ill-conditioned as Mrs. Constable knew Denborough Park to be, she found it even worse than she had imagined: for when she had been there last, some show of external care was visible, and there was then kept such a number of domestics as to give some appearance of life to the place. Now, the only living object that she saw was the audacious figure of Jack, who was treading down the snow to make himself a slide; and who, on seeing so singular a phenomenon as a carriage approaching, set up a shout, clapped the gate to, which he had set open for his own diversion, and then gathered up a snow-ball, with which he saluted the postilion. The barouche drove on without deigning to the urchin even a reproof, though the postilion was obliged to dismount to open the gate. They drove past the principal front, round two sides of the house, but still no sign whatever of life was visible; and even

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when they drew up at the customary entrance, the door seemed as firmly shut against them as if it had been fastened with bars of iron. The postilion struck upon it heavily, both with the large but broken knocker, and then with the butt-end of his riding-whip; but though the sounds echoed from within, no answer was given to their summons: old Milly was smoking a pipe at her grand-daughter's. After they had waited so long that even the patience of the calm Mrs. Constable was exhausted, she desired the boy to try if access were indeed possible that way. The door opened readily, giving to view the long, desolate, and not over-clean arched passage, which led to the kitchen. As the house was perfectly familiar to Mrs. Constable, she dismounted, making sure of finding somebody within. The neglected and forlorn internal arrangement caught her eye wherever she came. A very small fire was burning in the immense kitchen-grate, giving almost more than anything else could have done the character of miserable parsimony. It was absolutely chilling to see that handful of fire, on that dreary winter's day, laid within the compressed creepers, leaving almost a yard of cold iron-bars on either side;

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and to see that thin, feeble line of smoke passing up a chimney as large as an ordinary room. Still nobody was to be seen. Mrs. Constable, therefore, determined to proceed onward to the apartments that had been used by her friend, lying at the other end of the house, not doubting but she should find Julia there. Onward accordingly she went, without encountering Sir Harbottle,—he was in his den busied about his own affairs;—past room after room, the doors of which were all shut, and up flights of broad magnificent stairs, bare and long-neglected; and along once-richly decorated galleries, making her own observations as she went, and pausing for a moment to look how the rain had come in by the window and broken ceiling; until, at length, she reached the apartments whither she was bound. Here again she knocked, but without success. It was like the very house of death and desertion. She entered the room, and the first thing that caught her eye was the denuded walls;—was it possible, she inly exclaimed, that those holy pictures could be gone! Still, here there were the signs of habitation, and abundant proofs of an elegant and refined taste: many a beautiful decoration—books,

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and music, and vases which had held flowers; and the furniture, which had been of the most costly kind, was all well preserved, — and beyond this, all was neat and perfectly clean. But Julia was not here; nor, from the appearance of the grate, could have been there that day. She then advanced to the inner apartments, and, as was most natural, made her first attempt at the door of Lady Grimstone's chamber; but it was fast. Julia's came next, and there Mrs. Constable entered. The light of the chamber was dimmed, and Julia was reclining in her easy-chair asleep by the fire; for though she could not sleep through the night, a heavy slumber of ten came upon her in the course of the morning.

The shock which her son had felt on seeing the wasted form of Bernard was even surpassed by Mrs. Constable's sensations on seeing the figure now before her; so unlike the bright, healthful Julia of five years back. It was a figure as of pure marble; the lips still red, though the eyes were sunk; and every feature so richly chiselled, that, though attenuated, the contour of the face was the most exquisite that can be conceived: the expression, too, one of

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angelic sweetness, as of a sleeping seraph. The rich, black and abundant hair was simply put up in one large knot; contrasting, as did the finely-lined dark eyebrow, and long, dark lashes, with the pure whiteness of the almost transparent skin. She lay back, her head turned slightly aside, in the most perfect repose, wrapped in a loose white dress, the shoulders enveloped in the folds of a dark India shawl, her small white hands lightly laid together upon her bosom. Her chair was of crimson damask, richly carved and luxuriously cushioned. The cushion, however, upon which her head rested, belonged to some other piece of former magnificence; it was of ancient white damask tasselled with gold.—We have been thus particular in this description, because Mrs. Constable, who had a remarkably acute eye for such things, was not only struck with the wonderful and touching beauty of Julia herself,—with that chastened melancholy of countenance, and that evidently drooping, suffering frame,—but also with the striking harmony of the auxiliaries. She thought she had never seen so lovely yet so affecting a picture; her eyes filled with tears, and a sentiment as of maternal love warmed

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her heart and melted it into deep sympathy. Fearful to disturb her, Mrs. Constable drew her chair softly to the opposite side of the hearth, and sat down intending to await her waking. She had not sat long, when, without raising her head, Julia opened her eyes in that quick consciousness which in sleep makes us aware of an approach. Her last thoughts had been of Westow, and of its dear returning inmates: what wonder then, if, on seeing the figure before her, she doubted her senses and believed it a deception of the brain? A sudden flush of crimson, however, mantled her cheeks, and a faint scream of joyful recognition escaped her, as Mrs. Constable proved her own identity by rising with a "God Almighty bless you, my poor child!" taking her hand and folding her to her bosom. So singular a mark of favour from the mother of Walter Constable had never been extended before, and the poor girl, overcome as much by this welcome but unexpected show of affection as by her unexpected appearance, wept out her full-hearted emotions as if there could be no end to her tears.

Mrs. Constable had formed a determination while she had watched Julia sleeping, and the ex-

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change of but a few sentences with her still more confirmed it. "How long had she been ill?" "Oh, she was not ill—could not be ill now!" persisted Julia: but Mrs. Constable was not to be so persuaded. "Whom had she to nurse her—what domestics were there in the house?" Julia confessed the truth,—"There was but Milly in the house; but Peggy was her nurse;" and then she digressed to tell who Peggy was. Mrs. Constable shook her head. "But Peggy," she said, "was kind as a sister; and little Amy, she was like an angel! Oh, if Mrs. Constable could but see that sweet child!" Mrs. Constable again shook her head, as if she would convey that the child's parentage was enough for her. "She did very well," Julia said, "through the day; Peggy and Amy came in constantly: but, oh! the nights, they were long, and she felt so far from help if she were worse; and besides, at night she could not sleep." — "And where are the pictures, and the crucifix?" A deep blush overspread Julia's face, and for a moment she hesitated to reply; she felt jealous of Mrs. Constable knowing all the secrets of the house; and it was only after a pause, in which she satisfied her own

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mind that it was better to be candid at once, that she told how they had been disposed of. "Poor child! poor child!" exclaimed Mrs. Constable, extremely shocked; "to take from you even your religious helps! But you shall go home with me: Westow from this time shall be your home; I will nurse you myself, and Walter—— But, bless me! what is the matter!" Julia had fallen back in her chair like one dead, at once overcome by the uncontrollable ecstasy of feeling. Mrs. Constable was alarmed, and instantly produced pungent salts and reviving essences from her pocket. "Oh, shall I go to Westow!" murmured Julia, returning to consciousness,—"to dear, dear Westow!" and then she clasped her hands and looked upward in unutterable thankfulness. "Is it possible!" she exclaimed the next moment: "is it not a dream! Dear Mrs. Constable, you will think me beside myself; but you know not what you promise me—you know not what it will be to exchange Denborough Park for Westow! how should you?"

Winterly as was the day, and perilous as Mrs. Constable in her own mind feared the immediate removal of Julia might be, she could not satisfy

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herself to defer it even for milder weather: the whole winter was before them, and the weather, instead of improving, might entirely cut off all communication between the two houses. Julia must be wrapped up securely; the cushions must be carried to the barouche; and under its capacious head, with its curtains drawn in front, Mrs. Constable persuaded herself the business could be managed without risk. And Peggy entering shortly afterwards, Mrs. Constable, with considerable kindness of manner,—for, spite of her prepossessions against her, she was struck by her mild, intelligent countenance,—turned to consult her on the subject; telling her at the same time that she felt obliged to her for the attention she had shown Miss Grimstone. This condescension made poor Peggy the most grateful of creatures; and finally to her was entrusted the packing up Julia's clothes and whatever else belonged to her, for which Mrs. Constable promised to send.

The loss of Julia was like an earthquake shock to the kind-hearted and affectionate young woman; and little Amy, who had followed her mother, and without being observed had heard what was going forward, stood, in her meek unobtrusiveness,

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like one paralysed, her hands laid together, and the large tears chasing each other down her cheeks, without venturing a word or introducing herself into notice by praying for a farewell.

Julia thought of her father, and spoke of the propriety of asking his permission, or at least taking leave of him; but Mrs. Constable, who, after what she had seen since she entered the house, had conceived even a stronger dislike to Sir Harbottle than she had before, had no desire to see him, and therefore silenced, and in great measure satisfied Julia, by saying, "Make yourself easy, Miss Grimstone—I will take all responsibility upon myself; and you know, my dear young lady, Sir Harbottle's temper is not of the evenest, — we had better get off quietly if we can; and besides, it is high time I was at home." Julia, perhaps even more impatient than Mrs. Constable herself to be at Westow, made no farther resistance; and then folding dear Amy to her bosom, and kissing and blessing, and shedding abundant tears over her, and consoling her with an assurance that she should see her at Westow, was conducted by Peggy to the

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barouche, taking also of her a grateful and affectionate leave.

In less than one hour afterwards, Julia, with such feelings as it is impossible to describe, found herself within the home of Walter Constable's mother, less as a visitor than an inmate. It was such a blessed change, so instantaneously brought about, that, like one overpowered by a sudden translation to heaven from the penalties and pains of earth, she sat in silent happiness, enjoying the all-sufficient consciousness of being so supremely blest. By degrees the more tangible, not to say common-place causes of her bodily comfort, made themselves felt: there was on all hands warmth, plenty of domestic order, and still more, the unstinted and affectionate forethought and watchfulness of Mrs. Constable herself, with the full ability not only to wish, but to accomplish; and then, beyond all, came the crowning felicity of being at Westow — in the very rooms where Walter had read, and spoke, and thought, and where she knew not how soon he might again be. Thus Julia sat, on the first evening of her removal, by the glowing fire in Mrs. Constable's most snug and most old-fashioned of dressing-

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rooms, her own chamber also opening into it. Could she be other than supremely happy? The interest Julia, for her own sake, had already inspired in the heart of Mrs. Constable, even more than the reaction which the death of poor Bernard had occasioned there, made her seem altogether like another person; and as she sat in her high-backed needle-worked chair, busied at her knitting, smiling and talking cheerfully, Julia could hardly believe that beamingly-kind face, that actively-affectioned spirit which spoke in almost every sentence, could belong to the cold, measured Mrs. Constable, whose manners had formerly repelled her. "It is thus," thought Julia, "that she appears to Walter!"—and even more than for her kindness to herself, Julia loved her from this consideration.

And now my readers must please to imagine, if they can, how Julia felt, when, after a parting kiss and benediction, and reiterated instructions from Mrs. Constable as to how she was to be summoned if Julia wanted her in the night, she laid her head upon her pillow, and saw, through her half-closed curtains, the cheerful fire blazing in her room, and lighting fitfully many a dim and

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ancient portrait, or formal group of flowers, or more ambitious basket of fruit in faded needlework, the much-admired labour of some fair lady whose portrait adorned either this or some other more dignified apartment. It would be no longer wearisome to lie awake at nights, Julia thought;—nay, she felt as if to go to sleep, and to lose the assurance of all this great happiness, was what she did not desire. But sleep did come, sweetly and balmily as it had seldom done at Denborough Park; and then came the waking again,—the certainty, even through the dimmed light of the room, that it was all reality—that she was in the very home in which Walter Constable was born, and whither he would return—for what?—to make her his wife! Happy Julia! she forgot her weakness—the cruel malady that had destroyed her bloom and bowed her down towards an early grave. But in this sense, too, "perfect love casteth out fear;" and Julia could not fear—could have no presentiment of evil in this great happiness, this "perfect love."

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CHAPTER XX.

It was a full hour after Julia's departure from Denborough Park before either Milly or Sir Harbottle knew what had taken place. Sir Harbottle, as may be supposed, was not a little indignant. "It was a great liberty—a most unheard-of liberty! What! did the woman suppose that there was neither bread nor water at Denborough Park, but she must carry off his daughter to such a miserable hole as Westow? Why, there were not more than seventy acres in the whole estate at Westow! He would disinherit his daughter! — that he would! He knew what she was gone for—it was to marry that Walter Constable!" And so Sir Harbottle went on, excepting that a plentiful intermixture of oaths came in, like seasoning to a dish, to add force to his words. Milly, however, who in her heart was glad to be rid of Miss Grimstone on many accounts, soothed him down surprisingly; and, without noticing what he had alluded to of her attachment to Walter Constable, took up a view of the subject which she did not doubt would influence

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him. "It was better," she said, "that Miss Julia should be wi' somebody as could nurse her; poor thing, she was dying by inches as it was!—and then only think of the coal that must have been burnt to keep up a fire night and day in her chamber, and of the money it would cost, say nothing of trouble, to find her in nice little dainties, such as she could fancy; for as to eating boiled beef and batter-pudding—say nothing of the bread that was often mouldy, his honour ate it so stale—why her very heart went against 'em! That, for her part, she thought it a very neighbourly good action of the old lady to take her off. And then," continued she, in a low tone of particular emphasis, "supposing her gets worse—as, be' leddy, I think her will, for I buried a daughter myself as was just in her way; why, you see, them as have her mun pay the doctor,—for as to doing without a doctor, that 's clear nonsense! His honour," she persisted, "was in luck's way to have such friends: a poor body's child might have been dead and buried afore any one would ha' thought it worth their while as much as to ask after it!" And so the old woman talked; and Sir Harbottle, though sorely

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against his will, listened, and listening, though he grumbled out his oaths and threats still, saw some reason in what she said. "Since Mrs. Constable," he muttered, more angry with her than with his daughter, "had chosen to remove her from under his roof, why she must provide for her."—"Ay, to be sure,—to be sure!" echoed Milly; "and a pretty saving it will be to your pocket!"

Still, although Sir Harbottle was somewhat mollified by this important consideration, he kept his resentment hot both against Julia and her friends. "Anywhere," muttered he over and over to himself, "but to Westow!—It is a d—d liberty, and I never will forgive it!"

Exactly one week after Julia had been under Mrs. Constable's roof, as she lay in bed about midnight, she fancied she heard a carriage drive to the door and a bustle in the house. What could it be, but that Walter had arrived? Her heart beat violently, and she felt ready to faint. She listened eagerly if she could catch his voice, but all again was profoundly still; nothing was to be heard but the beating of her own heart. Julia

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was too full of excitement to sleep, and getting up, and throwing on her large furred cloak, she looked into Mrs. Constable's dressing-room: all was dark and still there, and the fire had burnt out as it was suffered to do when Mrs. Constable retired for the night. It must be fancy, she thought,—or perhaps she had slept, and it was a dream; and with such an unsatisfactory belief she again lay down to rest.

In the morning, she anxiously studied the countenance of Mrs. Constable. But it was calm: and, which seemed farther to disprove her fancy, breakfast was served as usual in the dressing-room, where, for the accommodation of Julia, Mrs. Constable had taken it, always saying that when her son came she would have it with him below. It was an unusually silent breakfast, and it was not till Mrs. Constable was taking her second cup of chocolate that she began to talk. "I hope you will be able to dine down-stairs to-day: I shall have that nice pheasant which Dr. Shackleton sent;"—(and, by the bye, we must interrupt this little speech, to say that this Dr. Shackleton was a physician whom Mrs. Constable had called in the day after she brought Julia to Westow;)—

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"that nice pheasant," she said, "which Dr. Shackleton sent, I shall have cooked,—a little slice would be quite a relish for you."—"Yes, I certainly am much better, dear Mrs. Constable, I think I can go down."—"I shall have company to dinner, my love." Julia gasped for breath. "Is he come then?" she said in an almost inarticulate voice.

"Do not excite yourself!" said Mrs. Constable; "I will tell you. A friend of my son's is come; we may consider him as a forerunner of Walter. An excellent friend this has been to him! I hope he may supply to us the place of our poor dear Father Cradock."

"He is a priest then?" said Julia.

"He is: I could not be satisfied that you should be so long without such comforts as our religion can give us."

Julia grasped the hand of Mrs. Constable, and her heart was deeply touched by this new proof of regard—this new promise of consolation.

"My dear child," returned Mrs. Constable, in a tone of great kindness, "we must make use of all means in our power to keep you with us; and, independently of your own spiritual ad-

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vantage, I have great faith in the intercession of a holy man: we are told to ask and we shall receive! You remember these promises."

Julia kissed the hand which she held without being able to speak, and a long thoughtful silence ensued. "I had a fancy," at length said she, unable to lose the idea that had possessed her, "that Walter came last night."

"Well, my dear young lady, and suppose he did?"

"Then he *did!*" exclaimed she, growing at once deathly pale, and then a burning glow lighting up her countenance. "Dearest Walter! Oh! Mrs. Constable, I will be so calm—you shall see how calm, only let me see him!"

The very next moment Walter himself clasped her in his arms, and she was weeping such a passion of tears upon his bosom as entirely discredited all the assurances of calmness she had given to Mrs. Constable but a minute before.

Although Walter had been prepared by his mother for the sorrowful change he would find in Julia, he was not prepared for it in its full extent. The chastened, angel-like expression—that peculiar, holy look which seems to belong less

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to this world than the next, which had been impressed upon her countenance from the commencement of this illness, — touched him more deeply, and filled him with a more intense and affectionate solicitude, than even the drooping and attenuated frame; and he held her to his heart with such an overpowering agony of love as made him think fortune, rank, youth—whatever is held most desirable—as light, nay, as absolutely nothing, in comparison with but one assurance that her beloved life might be spared. And then, after the first excitement was over, what hours of cordial, endearing intercourse followed! How much was to be told, how much to be heard! what gentle reproof to be given for sorrows and anxieties concealed,—what pauses that were filled up with long embraces, and with looks, fuller even than words, of tenderness! And so let us leave them to be happy for two days, and in the mean time tell our readers, that, melancholy as had been the effect of these five years upon Julia, Walter in appearance was improved, although he looked more than five years older. He was a fine, noble, and distinguished-looking man. He was one who impressed the beholder

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at once with respect and admiration;—admiration for the nobility of his person,—respect for the stamp of intellect and high principle which was upon him.

And now, on the third evening after his return, we will look in upon the evening party round the parlour fire. There, on the warmest side, reclined Julia, cushioned and wrapped in rich shawls and furs, upon the large couch-like sofa, with its curious cover of needle-work; and by her side, upon a low seat, sat poor little Amy, who the day before had walked up in the frost and snow to Westow to see her, and had been detained, happy child! to wait upon her. There she sat meek and quiet, her heart full of grateful love, and her large blue eyes every now and then turned upward to Julia with a very peculiar expression. Walter leaned over the back of the sofa; and while he held one hand which he often pressed to his lips, he was pleading some cause with Julia which called up a crimson blush over her marble-like countenance. What this cause was, Mrs. Constable shall explain. "Nay, my dear," she said, laying down her knitting, and turning to

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Julia, "why should you hesitate? there is nothing either unusual or improper in it. Father Jerome is here, and Dr. Shackleton too; they are playing at chess in the little room. And as to bridesmaids, why there you are unlucky, I grant you. I am somewhat too old, and this little friend of yours too young; but I do not fear our managing. What say you to it, Amy—shall Miss Julia be married?" said she, playfully turning to the child. Amy blushed deeply, but made no reply.

Julia spoke something in a low voice, and the tears fell as she spoke. "No, no, my beloved," replied Walter in his tenderest tone, "our dear Bernard's memory would be honoured by it! God knows, it is a holy rite, and the blessed spirit of our friend will sanctify it by his presence!"

After a moment's pause, Julia raised her beautiful head, and with her dark, eloquent eyes, without speaking one word, looked at Walter. He understood the expression, and impressing a long kiss upon her lips, and fervently blessing her, came forward. Mrs. Constable saw that consent was given, and rolling up her knitting, kissed

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Julia also, brought her a small glass of wine, which she insisted on her drinking, and then taking little Amy by the hand, went out.

"I did not think once that this happy event would happen thus!" said Julia with a deep sigh, looking at her dress. "Oh! dearest Walter, may God forgive me if I cling too much to the world now,—if I am less willing to meet the things that He has appointed than I was!"

"My beloved," returned Walter, his own heart deeply affected, "God himself has ordained our happiness!"

"O that I had health and strength—that I were such as I once was!" said Julia in a voice of anguish. "Your wife, dearest Walter, should not be such as I am now!" And then, in an agony of overwrought feeling, she covered her face and wept.

"Julia, my dearest one," said Walter, "you are to me ten thousand times dearer than ever! Look up, my love,—think what miracles true affection can do, and from this hour we shall not part again. You do not consider the long life of happiness that lies before us. Look up, my own Julia! you shall recover if there be power

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in medicine, if there be power in love; — and there is — there is, my dear one! I know it!"

Walter spoke his passionate wishes, not his belief; and Julia, willing to believe, was willing also to be comforted.

Presently after came in the servants, with six tall candles: and next, Mrs. Constable and Amy reappeared,— the child wearing a broad sash of white silk, and Mrs. Constable in her best cap and best cambric apron. Immediately after entered Father Jerome in his priest's vestments, bearing an open book in his hand,—and Dr. Shackleton, the most kind of physicians, followed. It seemed an awful thing this while to poor Julia; who, agitated and trembling, sat pale as marble, conscious of, yet hardly comprehending one half of the tender and assuring words which Walter spoke in his low, rich voice.

And now the ceremony was over, and the servants brought in wine and chocolate with great state. That old parlour, with its dark oak wainscot, and its grand portraits, — John Constable, the fair Lady Blanche, and all the rest, — looked exceedingly well: so did the group that was in it;—little Amy standing against the carved wood-

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work of the chimney-piece, full of wonder and awe; Mrs. Constable, an excellent figure for an old lady, and in good keeping with her house, talking confidentially with Dr. Shackleton; and Walter again leaning over the sofa where Julia was reclining — the very emblems were they of honour and virtue; and lastly, Father Jerome emptying a glass of wine to the happiness of the newly-married pair.

The next day, as Sir Harbottle Grimstone sat in his room, he was startled by a knock at his door, so unlike that of the old woman, that he rose instantly to open it, not even thinking it might be his son's.

"Well, sir!" said he with kindling anger, when, after a moment's pause, he recognised his visiter to be Walter Constable.

"You must permit me a few minutes' conversation with you, Sir Harbottle." The baronet, out of humour as he was, made way for him to enter, and then closed the door, muttering to himself that it was "a great liberty!"

Walter, without waiting for an invitation, sat down; and Sir Harbottle, looking at him in utter astonishment at what he considered his assurance,

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sat down also, saying at the same time, "I am very much amazed, Mr. Walter Constable, after what passed between us, to see you here: you are taking a great liberty, let me tell you!"

"I remember our last interview, Sir Harbottle, but I am willing to forget it: your money has been paid you—cannot there now be good will between us?"

"Good will!" exclaimed he; "good will with a vengeance! when your mother comes here and carries off my daughter without any leave of mine, and especially after what had passed between us!"

"Sir Harbottle, you know the state of your daughter's health!"

"I tell you what, sir," said he, "if my daughter marries you, I will cut her off with a shilling!—you know my mind!"

"When you forbade me to address your daughter, you considered me as a poor man! I remember your taunts, Sir Harbottle!"

"If you are come on such a fool's errand as to ask my consent now, why, I tell you, you 'll never get it!"

"I am not come for that purpose, sir!—nothing was farther from my mind."

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"Well then, send my daughter home again—it is not a reputable thing for her to be under your roof!"

"Your daughter is my wife!"

"Wife!" roared Sir Harbottle in rage; "tell me that again!"

"When you are calm, Sir Harbottle."

"I will not give her a shilling!" continued he, fiercely; "I will see her die at my own door before money of mine shall go to patch up Westow!"

"Thank God!" said Walter Constable, "your money is not needed; nor will my wife want: I am not as dependant on fortune as I was five years ago, but could make a handsome settlement on your daughter!"

"Stuff!" said Sir Harbottle in contempt. "You think yourself a mighty clever man—I should like to know what your cleverness has ever done for my family: there was that fool Bernard——"

"Sir Harbottle!" said Walter with a solemnity that made the angry man pause instantly, "Bernard is dead! And if ever a blessed spirit passed from death unto life, it was he!"

"Do you know that he robbed me?" said Sir

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Harbottle, trying to stifle the troublings of his conscience.

"Did he not return you the money? Sir Harbottle, you have been a hard, a cruel, a most unjust parent! Heaven blessed you with a son and daughter such as but few men possess, and what have you done for them? Did you not neglect them in their youth, and in their more mature years subject them to degradation—Bernard at least—and suffer them to endure privation and hardship of every kind, that you might accumulate about you that miserable pelf which will be squandered to the winds and made the instrument of every degrading vice by your elder sons!"

"Bernard," continued Walter, seeing Sir Harbottle disinclined to speak, "might have died of starvation in the streets of London—he might have committed suicide in his desperation; what did it matter to you? But, Sir Harbottle, there was a Father who did not abandon him; who saved him through these extremes of misery—even the great God to whom you must account for your neglect! The very money which that poor fellow restored to you was drained, as it were, from his very life's blood! Good Heavens!

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when I consider what Bernard has done less to ennoble himself than our common nature, and look at you sitting here like an earth-worm in the darkness of its own miserable prison-house, I am filled with the most sovereign contempt of money!"

Walter paused, expecting some remark; but Sir Harbottle only turned in his chair, and Walter continued—

"I am wearing mourning for your son at this time. Two weeks are scarcely passed since I closed his eyes, and saw him buried in the place which he had chosen for his interment. Thank God! you are not without feeling," said Walter, seeing a tear actually hang on Sir Harbottle's eyelid: "give me your hand—I honour you for this emotion."

Sir Harbottle, offended that this emotion had been observed, and especially by Walter Constable, kept back his hand and muttered that "the lad was a fool—there was no need for him to have left home;—that here he might have had food and clothing, and have led a nice idle life; but that since he would go, of course he would have to abide the consequences."

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Walter then produced Bernard's letter, which he offered to leave with him; but Sir Harbottle declared he could not read so much written-hand—it seemed to him to be a very bad hand too; and since the poor lad was dead, he did not see what would be the use of it. "But," said he, "if you laid any money down for funeral expenses or such, why I have no objection to refund you."

"Poor fellow!" said Walter, "he had sufficient for all he needed. Upwards of twenty pounds remained after all expenses were paid."

"Ay," said Sir Harbottle quickly, "and what became of that?"

"It was bequeathed by himself to persons who had shown him much kindness; to a poor woman and her daughter, with whom he lodged."

"Well, then, you see he did not want," observed Sir Harbottle with considerable self-satisfaction. "Here has been a pretty stir about nothing!—but, however, I am as well pleased that the poor fellow did not want!"

Farther impression than this Walter could not make; he and Sir Harbottle, however, parted better friends than they had ever been before.

But little more need now be said. The per-

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fect happiness of Julia, and the affectionate care that was extended to her, in some degree restored her health for a time; but the seed of death had too surely been sown amid the discomforts and anxieties of her former home; and though she was taken by her husband into Italy, and attended by the most skilful of physicians, and nursed with the most extraordinary care, she returned to Westow, as was her wish, within four years of her marriage, to die.

A few words must now be said of little Amy. She remained with Julia as long as she continued at Westow, and then, feeling as if she could not attach herself to Mrs. Constable, by her own desire returned to her mother. The history of that poor child's heart would be a beautiful illustration of what our human nature is capable of. She was uncomplaining, and meek as an angel, and willing to endure all things for those she loved. She was her mother's nurse, her confidant, her comfort. She was the only blessing her poor mother ever had.

Of Denborough Park as little shall be said as needful: it is an unpleasant task to turn again to crime and degradation, but it must be done to make our history complete.

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Within five years of the time when Julia left her home, the insolent and shameless depravity of Christopher Grimstone grew into such frightful excesses that his father forbad him the house. Next, a daring burglary was committed, and the escritoir of the miser completely rifled. The boy Jack (then grown into a daring reprobate), his father, and his father's tool, Robert Grimstone, were strongly suspected; and Sir Harbottle then called in the arm of the law to protect him against his sons. The condition of Peggy was miserable in the extreme. She and her family were driven from their home in the stable-yard, and afterwards inhabited a small house in the village of Denborough, where they were still provided for, unknown to Sir Harbottle, by the old woman. Milly was now the sole living being about the premises; and though she hated Sir Harbottle, and hated still more his son Christopher, she remained at Denborough Park that she might secure to her grand-daughter and her children the means of life. Sir Harbottle, grown tenfold suspicious, became morose and irritable to such a degree as made his very life a burden to himself; and though he dared not dismiss old Milly, because he feared

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to see a new face, he looked upon her as a harpy ready to snatch the keys from his bosom and plunder his treasures before his face. Such, it was reported, was indeed the case on the night of his death, when old Daniel Neale, then in his ninety-seventh year, summoned our reverend friend from Wood Leighton to attend him, as was related at the commencement of this history.

"It was a wonder to himself," the beggar said, "why he went there. It was in no expectation of an alms, for an alms never was given at Sir Harbottle's door; but it was because he felt persuaded that he *must* go. He reached the outer door — it was open; he knocked, but no one came; he entered, feeling his way with his long staff in the pitchy darkness—he stumbled over an old table, he hammered upon it with his stick and shouted, but no one appeared. At length, still advancing onward—amazed, yet filled with desperate curiosity, he went on: presently he heard a faint groan — another, and then another. He followed the sound after a momentary pause, in which he felt as if a sudden spasm of fear had compressed him into half his natural size, for he thought of the nabob and of all those mysterious

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secrets to which he alone was privy. Presently a faint glimmer caught his eye; it was the expiring fire in Sir Harbottle's chamber, and on he went into that large ghastly room, where he perceived, directed by his ear, and by the dubious twinkling of a small lamp, a fearful object of dying misery.

"God help you, Sir Harbottle!" exclaimed Daniel, holding up both his hands.

"Off with you! away!—thief! plunderer!" screamed the dying man.

"I am no thief," said Daniel; "I would not finger your gold! But Christ and all his saints help you, Sir Harbottle!"

"There 's nothing left! nothing, nothing!" still cried the miser.

"Oh, your poor lost soul! Shall I run for Father Cradock!" said Daniel, forgetting that the good priest was dead.

"Run," said the dying man, faintly comprehending the words addressed to him,—"run for Lawyer Wolfe. I am robbed! I am ruined! That hag has robbed me, and those cursed lads will be coming to carry all away!"

Daniel departed with a swifter step than he entered, and sped at an almost incredible rate

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to the house of Mr. Somers, and then to the lawyer's; but before either lawyer or minister arrived, the spirit of the miser had departed.

Sir Harbottle died without a will, or at least no will was ever found; all, therefore, came to the hands of his elder son. Sir Christopher Grimstone will long be remembered as the abhorrence of the whole country; Robert sank into a weak-spirited dependant, to whom his brother allowed a weekly stipend, and for many years he filled the post of gamekeeper.

Strange to say, Sir Christopher established himself at Knighton, and within ten years of his father's death the house at Denborough Park was taken down and the materials sold. We visited the spot where it had stood; but nothing remained excepting the inequality of the ground and one solitary plane-tree, to mark either its site or that of its once extensive grounds;—inhabitants, house, everything had vanished before the mysterious working of the nabob's curse.

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AN AUTUMN DAY IN THE FOREST.

Time had rolled away,—spring, summer, were gone; but it had rolled away to our perception rapidly, and in that word rapidly, we say that it had not gone without being enjoyed. Highly, indeed, had the passing seasons been enjoyed. With our pleasant friends we had made acquaintance with a pleasant neighbourhood, and every day grew more and more attached to it. Many a delightful day we had spent in beautiful and retired places, amongst green fields, flowing waters, shadowy woods, and picturesque abodes and people;

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot:"

and many a pleasant project we had conceived which we were never able to carry into effect. One of these was to spend a grand summer-day with a gay party in Needwood Forest, to dine and take tea under the great Swilcar-lawn oak. Everything indeed was arranged; all the com-

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mittees, cogitations, and contrivances preparatory to such an important event, had been passed through. In the first place, the number, and the persons to constitute that number, had been decided upon. There were to be twenty people! Twenty people to be selected for a pic-nic out of that little place! At first it was proposed to be select; but it was suggested that it would be better to be more merry;—and to be very merry, it was absolutely necessary to have hearty people, and odd people, and funny people, and people that could tell a good story, crack a good joke, and sing a good song. And then it was as absolutely necessary to have useful people in a rustic party;—people that could turn a hand to anything; that were capital at pitching on snug and eligible places for encampment,—constructing seats of moss, or heather, or logs of wood, or even of good substantial stones; placing tender people out of the wind, and propping weak backs with good old trunks of trees; that could help to pitch the poles and hang the kettle, to blow the fire, and even run and collect sticks occasionally. Do my readers think that such persons are not to be found? They are much mistaken. We know

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such persons, and they are wealthy people too, that would delight to take upon themselves these Gibeonite functions in a social pic-nic; and so far from thinking it any sacrifice of dignity, would pride themselves on their adroitness in them. And it is well known on such occasions, that the fewer the servants, the fewer the annoyances; and even where there are ever so many of them, one good and ingenious person of this kind, bustling and ardent, puts life and spirit into all about him.

Well, then, it was necessary to consider who in all Wood Leighton bore these various and estimable characters; and next, it was as necessary to balance likings and antipathies, and eschew family feuds, and jealousies of rank and wealth: for, alas! Wood Leighton was no more exempt from these earthly cankers, than any other sweet place on this rolling globe. It was soon clear enough that this person would not go if that person went; and if that person went, this would not;—and yet, if this or that were left out, oh! the dudgeon and the heart-burnings there would be! And, what was more, one thought this person quite a bore,— another, that person too grave,— another,

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that too giddy and giggling: and as for Mr. or Mrs. or Miss Such-a-one, oh! they always spoiled every party they went into; they got out of temper, or they could see no fun in what was going on. There were the over-wise, the yawners, the cold-water-throwers, in poor dear Wood Leighton. And on the other side, there were the racketty,—people who could not discern any bounds of propriety, who took riot for wit, cracking bottles for cracking jokes; and some who were apt to get muddled and foolish when they did not intend it, and were betrayed into a troublesome condition of maudlin fondness and importunity, by sheer gaiety of heart and desire to be agreeable. There were, too, a certain class who would set off in the highest delight, and before they had well got to the place of rendezvous, began to wonder what they came for; were afraid of taking cold, or suddenly remembered some engagement that a fortnight's notice had never once made apparent, and were driving off back again just as the rest sat down on the grass to enjoy themselves.

Was not this enough to damp a whole regiment of pleasure-takers? Is it not enough any day?

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And yet everywhere such things exist, and everywhere such parties are formed; and so it was here. All these difficulties were got over amazingly; characters and dispositions selected, assorted, and amalgamated with great ingenuity, and the invitations sent; when, lo! there was a new species of difficulty developed. Some of the most desirable individuals could not go! This was inextricably engaged; that going a journey; a third expecting company; a fourth had given up all intention of indulging in such pleasures for the future; a fifth would love it above all things, but dare not venture, having caught a dreadful lumbago last summer by sitting only five minutes on a green bank. Here were awful gaps in the circle! But, on the other hand, there were heaps of volunteers ready to fill them up;—half a dozen begging they might bring this or the other friend; Mr. ——, such a very entertaining person, or Miss ——, so very poetical; and these even begging to extend the favour to third parties.

I shall not say how all these contingencies, that sprang up thick and unexpectedly as mushrooms, were disposed of; but they *were* disposed

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of. The carriages were determined upon, gigs, phaetons, pony-carriages, cars and shandrydans, and who were to fill each; and, moreover, all the baking of cakes and sweetmeats, packing of wine, and of all the various requisites for a substantial dinner and tea, were finished and brought to an end; — everything was ready but the day, and that too came—as fine a day as ever shone out in the finest of summers. At twelve o'clock, the time fixed on to set out, first one carriage and then another rolled up to the door, and our drawing-room was soon half-filled with a lively and anticipating group, who said that they had merely called to see that all was right, and that no untoward circumstance had occurred to prevent the going of the whole party, and they would now be driving on towards the forest. Just at this moment in came Charles Harwood, who said Mr. Somers was afraid a storm was coming on: a cloud was forming in the east, which had all the appearance of being the nucleus of a thunder-cloud, and was growing and coming up in the very face of the wind. "Surely not!" exclaimed every one at once; and out all rushed into the garden to see if this portentous cloud were

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visible there: and there sure enough it was, black as night, growing and creeping on with a lowering and tumultuous aspect, with a dark train extending to the horizon, and yet all in front the whole sky clear as crystal, and the sun shining in his noon splendour.

While we were looking at this gloomy apparition, which seemed to have arisen to chase away our long-concerted scheme of pleasure, others of the intended party came hurrying in, one after another, with eager looks and inquiries. "Well! what do you think? Will it pass over, or not?" And some thought it would, and others thought it would not; some thought it would be a mere flying cloud, and others that it would be a most awful tempest. Now one thought it was passing off to the south, and others that it grew thinner and paler, and would presently disperse; while, in fact, it was every moment becoming broader, nearer, vaster, and more intensely lurid. And now there appeared a tumultuous and whirling motion in the centre of the nimbus, with an ashen appearance of the clouds. There depended, as it were, a huge funnel, with the mouth applied to the cloud,

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and the narrow end downwards, which hung as in a dense column towards the earth, near which its lower extremity swept in hair-like lines, like the tail of a gigantic horse. All exclaimed at the singularity of the spectacle; but of its cause or nature there were opinions as various as on everything else. Some thought the cloud had burst, and was raining in that one singular dependent train; others, that it was a water-spout that was actually sucking up the water from the river; and, in fact, it actually seemed to hover over the river, and to follow its course. On this, it was suggested that if it burst, we should all be drowned; and at the fearful idea, the ladies fled away into the house in a moment. They of the stouter sex stood to watch the further progress of this strange object: and now, the thunder began to crash and growl overhead, peal after peal, most magnificently, but without any visible lightning; and, in another instant, lumps of ice as large as pigeon's eggs began to fall and rattle about us, at first distant from each other by several yards, but with wonderful rapidity increasing their proximity to each other, till they came in a deluge of the most astonishing hail

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we ever witnessed; no stones less than marbles, many much larger, and all dancing and leaping around, from trees, walls, and roofs, and in the grass lying one whole white expanse as of snow.

It is needless to say that the gentlemen vanished into the house with a hop, stride, and jump; and all stood gazing from the windows in silent admiration of the magnificent rage and plenitude of the storm. The thunder rolled and roared and crashed all over the heavens; the lightning flashed in the most vivid gleams past us; the hail fell as abundantly as ever, and amid deluges of rain that seemed as if they would drown the very world. For an hour at least this continued, till all around us was a sonorous hum of falling and rushing waters, from the heavens, from the houses, and along the streets, in one wide, discoloured flood. Here was an end of our pic-nic; and instead of regret, for a time at least, we seemed to feel glad and thankful that we were not on our way, and exposed to "the peltings of this pitiless storm." But when it began to abate, regrets began to show themselves. The memory of the plannings and contrivings, of the getting together

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of carriages and provisions, came upon the mind of all, and especially of some of the ladies. Some thought that we might still go to-morrow; but a dozen voices all at once cried, "No!" *they* couldn't go. They had pushed off engagements from this day to that,— *they* couldn't go!"—"What a pity! But, after all, could not we really go to day?"—"What!" said the prudent, "go through a river, and into a sea, as the forest must be?"—"Oh!" said the sanguine, "it will all be gone by in half an hour, and the sun will shine, and the ground be as dry as ever,—nay, who knew that it had fallen in the forest at all?" And truly, some would have been hardy enough to set off; but the rain, though its fury was gone by, still kept up a slight drizzling; the sky was filled with one dense grey cloud, and so remained till night. It was soon obvious to all that the plan must for this time be abandoned, and so with many a sigh it was given up. And presently came news and motives of curiosity and wonder that diverted all further thoughts from this ill-fared expedition. The gardens were found to be battered and perforated as with bullets; trees and plants of all descriptions were cut through, leaf and blossom, and hot-houses and

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conservatories were one enormous smash of glass; while the houses had suffered in their windows nearly as much, and looked for all the world as though they had been attacked by a mob. The whole town was one scene of ludicrous disasters,—if that can be ludicrous which is full of real trouble and domestic loss. Suddenly, people sitting on their hearths listening to the storm, found the water flowing in upon them from the flooded streets. Cellars were speedily filled; barrels were all afloat; many that were not securely bunged got muddy water mingled with their stout old ale; and others, swimming about, dashed the goodly contents out of congregated wine-bottles. In low kitchens and cottages, tables and chairs began to swim about; and the inhabitants fled upstairs with cradles, crying infants, and what dry linen and provisions they could collect. One little shoemaker, who worked in a sort of cellar under his house, that had a descent of steps and a door from the street, having given his wife some provocation, and being threatened with a retributive visit by his Amazonian dame, had bolted his door inside, and was thumping away on his lap-stone, in great inward satisfaction, and chuckling

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at the idea of his own security, and the disappointment of his spouse, when down rushed torrents of water from the streets through door and window, in such a deluge, that the alarmed man was speedily up to the middle, and in his consternation, and the darkness that accompanied the inrush of the water, could not find the bolt he had fastened on the door inside. He therefore set up a most stentorian shout, and beat on the door with his fists,—his hammers were all now at the bottom of the flooded cellar;—but neither could he make himself heard, nor beat in the door with his whole might, and there was a full prospect of drowning, when luckily his wife suddenly called him to mind, and looking out, saw the door of his working-cell shut, and the water rushing in a perfect river. Her anger instantly converted itself into terrified affection. She cried out, "Oh! my poor Johnny! he 'll be drowned! he 'll be drowned!" and rushing to the door, battered it in with a coal-hammer, and had the satisfaction to see her worthy husband standing up to the chin in water, and soon come creeping up the steps like a half-drowned rat.

This incident furnished a fund of merriment

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that set all Wood Leighton in a roar of laughter, and will, no doubt, serve for a standing joke against the poor Crispin while he lives. And, indeed, we heard that his wife already, on all occasions when she feels herself unhandsomely used by her husband, casts a very scornful and significant look at him, and says, "Eh, you poor rogue! where would you have been now had it not been for me in the great thunder-flood?"—the name by which this awful tempest generally now goes. And an awful storm it was. The very next day we heard that it had fallen on the forest with unexampled fury; had actually shattered to fragments several vast oaks, and killed several horses that were sheltering beneath them.

Thus was our grand day in the forest put aside as by the hand of Providence, and was given up entirely. But now, in the fine days of October, Elizabeth Somers and ourselves resolved to go, our own snug party of the two families, and spend the best of the day amid the fading splendours of its solemn woodlands. We drove first to the neighbourhood of Bagot's Park, through a region of retired farms, where no change seems to have come from age to age. Tall old hedges, old pas-

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tures with quiet cattle, old picturesque cottages and farm-houses thinly scattered, and silent fields and dark woodlands. I cannot express how strongly the profound calm of these primitive scenes affect my feelings and imagination. I could not help thinking, as we went along through embowered lanes, and then through little snatches of common and heath, now shut in by high banks and thick foliage, and now catching wide prospect over the country, how the tumult of towns, and the careful anxiety of trade, and the ten thousand wheels of manufactories were going; what countless human creatures were devoured by the perplexities of ill-requiting business, or the greater curse of an avaricious mania—what strugglings and contentions of commercial interest and political party were going on, while here lay an everlasting peace as the delicious heritage of an unambitious race.

The glories of October were around us. We had set off directly after breakfast, and the dews lay thick on the grass by the wayside; the waters ran here and there, sparkling and bubbling across the road; the gossamer stretched its fine lines from bush to bush and tree to tree, and its agglomerated webs came floating on the golden air

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in flakes, as of lightest cotton. On the green furze-bushes, the geometrical spiders exhibited their webs, concentric wheels of exactest workmanship, made more visible by innumerable dewy globules; the hedges were grown beautiful with the rich colour of their dying leaves, and their various berries,—the black privet and buckthorn, the hips and haws of bright scarlet and deep crimson. The air had that feeling of cool freshness, and that marvellous transparency never seen in our climate but in autumn; and the woods, in all their solemn magnificence of colours, scarlet, crimson, tawny, pale yellow, and richest russet—the woods, and the smoke of peacefullest cottages, rising up in blue and busy columns in front of their deep masses of foliage—Oh! they were beautiful! This was the feeling with which we rode along; and the only words we found to express our sensations were those of beauty,—peaceful, shining, and heart-satisfying beauty. In all my experience of human life, I know of no portion of it in which the goodness of Heaven and the blessings of a virtuous and refined friendship make themselves so sensibly and blissfully felt as in such moments as these, when the buoyancy of health felt through the whole

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frame is itself a perfect enjoyment; and the deep reposing loveliness of nature inspires us with feelings of gratitude to Heaven and affection for each other.

We put up our horses at a farm-house, the master of which was well known to Mr. Somers, and walked through some pleasant fields into Bagot's Park.

Passing the end of a keeper's house, we seemed to step at once out of modern England into the feudal ages. We seemed to have gone back with a thought through a thousand years. All round us lay the green and cultivated lands of the present times; yet we were in a grey and ancient region—a fragment of the past—a space apparently secured by a spell from the influence of time and change, except that silent and irresistible change into the aspect of the old and venerable. A belt of oaks stretched along a vast circumference, enclosing this ancient park. They were of a great growth, and of a remarkable height for oaks; trees of sixty and seventy feet in the boll, yet so old that scarcely one of them was without a scathed and broken top: and, issuing from beneath these, you looked into a silent

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region, amongst other oaks of equal age, some scattered far apart, others condensed into dark masses of wood,—some widely spreading, others shattered and sinking into naked decay. There were birch-trees too of great antiquity, with stems rugged and gashed near the ground; thence rising in silvery whiteness, and hanging their lithe and graceful branches almost to the earth. We walked in a quiet delight over the dry and mossy turf, amongst the tall red fern, startling the deer from their repose amongst it, or seeing them lightly trooping up some distant slope, and belling, some in hoarse, and others in musical notes—a truly forest sound! The ruddy squirrels were busy on the ground beneath the beech-trees that grew in some places, feasting on their fallen nuts, or scampered up the trees at our approach; and the varied and peculiar cries of the woodpecker, the jay, and the solitary raven, were all imbued with a woodland charm.

We soon came to a noble oak that seemed in the very prime of its existence, and spread such a mighty circle of shade beneath as created a perpetual gloom well meriting what Pope calls the "brown horror of the wood." When we

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had walked up to its foot, we were struck with strong admiration; its massy trunk spreading out in gnarled heaps at the ground, and above us extending its horizontal arms, each an enormous tree, to the width of forty feet. Great care was evidently and very justly taken by the noble proprietor to prevent decay or injury. Some of these vast arms were supported by stout pillars of timber, and plates of lead were nailed over every spot where a bough had fallen. From this giant of the woods,—called the Beggar's Oak, I know not wherefore, — we wandered along, visiting others of nearly equal dimensions; Mr. Somers evidently impressed strongly himself, and trying to impress us with the advantages of an aristocracy and the law of primogeniture, by which these noble parks and specimens of forest grandeur were preserved. And truly if primogeniture has any one popular advantage, it is this. One would not like to see these venerable solitudes and giant trees swept away by rapid changes and divisions of property. They are resting and breathing-places to the imagination. Square fields and regular fences are good things, so far as our animal wants go; but, as we feel wants beyond those of the

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mere animal—wants of the heart and the spirit, we would willingly have old parks and forests preserved, where we may occasionally retire from the noise of towns, from their artificial influences; from the rush of steam-coaches—the very sounds and indications of progression in the arts and facilities of social life,—from the strife of politics, and the claims of conflicting modes of religion; and there drink in the quiet spirit of nature, and feel that religion which haunts these shades and falls on the heart with all the holy power of Heaven, without one questioning doubt from a too-fastidious understanding. One would have them left to refresh the imagination; to call back our thoughts to the simple days and habits of our ancestors, and to imbue us with that loftier mind, that poetry which Milton, Spenser, and Shakspeare have gathered up and again diffused over such places with a tenfold glory. Yes, we would not have the traces of antiquity, the vestiges of a past state of existence, the manners of men and things connected with the stirring history of this great country, razed out amid the new and imposing forms of life: they should remain for their own venerable beauty and peace, or fall only as

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a sacrifice to the furtherance of all that is desirable for the great family of man. I say, we would not willingly allow them to disappear, though we could resign them as a sacred duty; and while we hold the law of primogeniture to be fraught with great injustice and many evils, we will accord it the one good quality of having preserved many of these venerable domains, though it must be allowed that it has not kept open a great number for the enjoyment of the public.

Talking of these things each with our peculiar views of them, we returned to the farmhouse, and we drove into the forest. We first visited the great Swilcar oak, a glorious old tree, sixty-five feet high, forty-five in the width of the boughs, and thirty-feet round the trunk near the earth. Here it was that we were to have held our summer pic-nic; and a superb tent it would have been for such a party—

Such tents the patriarchs loved:

but we now enjoyed a quiet delight in gazing on its regal immensity, and thence progressed far onward through the forest; sometimes admiring the rich farms, and broad, good roads, made where formerly stood one mass of woods; sweet

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villas, and ancient royal lodges; sometimes coming upon a gipsy encampment, or a little hamlet half hidden in trees. In one of these Mr. Somers drove up to a little rustic inn, saying here we could dine. As the carriage stopped under the great sycamore before the door, out came the landlord, out came the landlady, and out came the maid—a short, stout-built country lass, looking as if she had health enough in her to set up a score of delicate people. Our host was a tall man, looking more of the farmer than the publican—as he was in fact, and his wife as motherly-looking a woman as you could wish to see. There were bows, and curtsies, and smiles, which showed that our friends were both known and respected here. "Well, Mr. Brewin," said Mr. Somers, "still on the old spot, I see. I am glad to see both yourself and Mrs. Brewin looking so well. I hope you can find us something to eat, Mrs. Brewin; for I assure you we are *forest* hungry,—and there is a good carriage-full of us, you see."

"Well, sir, I think I can find you something," said our good-natured-looking dame, with another low curtsey. "I was just going to take

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up the dinner for the ploughmen; it is just one o'clock, and that is the hour they come home. They go out as soon as it is light in the morning, and they had need live well,—that is, what we call living well in our countrified way: and though it is but ploughman's fare, yet I fancy you and Miss Somers, and Mr. Charles, and these other gentry, will be able to make a dinner of it, for once in a while."

"Oh! no doubt on 't, no doubt on 't," said Mr. Somers. So we all bustled into the house, leaving our host to take out the horses. We were soon comfortably seated in a nice, clean, old-fashioned little parlour, looking into a garden as neat as the house, full of Michaelmas daisies, French marigolds, China asters, and those splendid flowers the dahlias, now got into every cottage garden, and other autumn flowers, and terminated by a vast and noble walnut-tree. Speedily our little sturdy maid spread a cloth white as the driven snow, and arranged the dinner apparatus with many bashful smiles and rosy blushes as Mr. Somers kept chatting to her in a voice of friendly jocularity. Presently she set on the table a capital piece of boiled beef, enough,

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one would have thought, for a regiment of ploughmen, with an accompaniment of nicely-dressed turnips, carrots, and potatoes. Then came a dish of barm dumplings, light as foam-balls on a river. There was sweet home-made bread; butter and cheese fit for a king; a glass of primest Burton ale; and water so cool, so crystalline, that Elizabeth exclaimed, "Why, Millicent"—so our maid was called—"you might have just fetched this from the Elf spring in the dingle, only that you certainly have not had the time."—"Master has fetched it, ma'am. He knows you are fond of that spring, and so he thought you would like your dinner better with some of it."—"Well, I am really obliged to Mr. Brewin," said Elizabeth, "though the dinner does not need such a luxury to make it acceptable: a forest stroll makes such a meal ten times more delicious than a palace banquet." We all joined heartly in the opinion; and Millicent, who had adroitly drawn the cloth while we were speaking, now reappeared from the kitchen with a plate of fresh Whiking pippins, and another of damascenes; and Mr. Brewin followed, with one of grapes from the house-side, and one

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of Catharine pears from the tree that adorned the outside of the kitchen-chimney; and we had scarcely expressed our admiration of this country dessert, when in came Millicent again with a little basket of filberts, and walnuts from the great tree. To complete so abundant a feast, Mr. Somers ordered wine—for our host was licenced to sell wine and spirituous liquors,—and Mrs. Brewin brought in a bottle of her elder-flower wine, which she did not sell, but gave to her particular friends. "It was what the ladies," she said, "always fancied:" and truly it was as living and sparkling and grape-like in its flavour, as any Frontignac that ever crossed the sea. Our rural entertainment, so far beyond our expectation, and the hospitable heartiness of our entertainers, put us all into high good-humour. Our host and hostess were invited to join us, having themselves dined at twelve o'clock; and they came: Millicent being deputed to supply the appetites of the ploughmen, now come in as hungry as we had been half an hour ago, and who were making a famous rattle with pewter-plates and knives and forks in the kitchen. Charles and Mr. Somers sat and talked past affairs over with our host and hostess,

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and we sat and listened to the most extraordinary stories of deer-stealers that used to haunt the purlieus before the enclosure of all but the Crown lands, and especially of the exploits of old Malabar, the most celebrated of them. I know not when my imagination has been more excited; and Charles and Mr. Somers seemed as highly interested as the old people themselves. Every now and then Mr. Somers kept saying, "Well! we must be going, for we must take our friends to see Mr. ——. They must see him, and his collection of forest curiosities." This was a gentleman who was a perfect enthusiast about the forest, as most dwellers near a forest generally are; for as in mountains, so in them, there is a wild charm that seizes forcibly on the imagination, and in people of any taste and sensibility becomes a perfect passion. It was the delight of this gentleman to roam about the forest at all hours, day or night, and at all seasons. All its native inhabitants, and their haunts, their habits, their mysteries, their occasional increase or decrease, or extinction, were all known to him; and his house, situated in a retired glen, was a complete museum of forest relics and antiquities, and

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of stuffed owls, hawks, ravens, curlews, weasels, stoats, squirrels, otters, and I know not what. We were anxious to reach his house, but it was not then to be. Mr. Somers repeatedly said, "Well, we *must* go!" but still the talk went on, till, pulling out his watch, he started up and showed by his countenance and exclamation his amazement at the discovery that it was six o'clock! The shadows of evening were already falling, and it was at an end with reaching Mr. ——'s. Our carriage was hastily ordered out; our bill discharged; our worthy host and hostess and our good rosy-armed Millicent bid a hearty good-b'ye to; and away we drove homewards.

In a little time we found ourselves in the village of Hanbury. The immense and splendid prospect there we had seen before, or we should now have been disappointed. But as it was a clear and rather breezy evening, there was yet light enough to make us sensible of its vast extent; and the valley of the Dove lay before us in the wildness of twilight and of autumn, solemn and gloomily beautiful. We could still discern the hill and turrets of Tutbury down the valley; the hall of Sudbury opposite, amongst its woods; and

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below us, the smoke ascending from the antique chimneys of Fauld Hall. The only sounds that reached us were the wind soughing amongst the woods; the low of cattle in the Dove meadows; and of some village-bells ringing cheerfully. The sound of those bells seemed to touch more deeply feelings already excited. As the carriage paused a moment, and we cast our eyes down over the sombre masses of forest-trees below us, several voices exclaimed at once "How beautiful!" Mr. Somers, over whom the woodland enjoyment of this day seemed to have brought more enthusiasm than I had ever seen in him before,—an enthusiasm as of ardent and happy youth,—took up the exclamation: "How beautiful!" "Yes! it *is* beautiful. The longer I live, the more do I become attached to this fine country. I know not whether many would not deem it unbecoming of the character of a Christian, and especially of a Christian teacher, to own a growing attachment to the things of this earth: but to my own heart I justify it by the reflection, that they are the works of God; and that the loveliness which calls forth so strongly my affectionate admiration, is that with which he has

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adorned the abode of his acknowledged children. I feel that I do not love earth with a sordid love: I do not covet it and grasp at it for any selfish end, but with a love and a delight in which every child of humanity is embraced, and everything, however humble, that is formed by the same hand, and lives and feels and enjoys, may and does in some degree, partake. I love these quiet regions for the refreshment and the sober blessing that they breathe upon my spirit. And shall I not feel a strong attachment to the scenes in which my days of the deepest happiness have passed? Shall I not love these? There are other spots, in my native and distant county—the spots in which my youth went over, that are dear to me with a peculiar and imperishable feeling; yet I do not hesitate to say, that these scenes are still dearer to me, because I have experienced here a second youth, the renewal and crown of my existence, the youth of affection and the life of the heart.

"We hear a great deal of the unsatisfiedness of the human heart; and, as a general proposition, no doubt it is true: but, God is my witness, there is no wish of my heart that has not been

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amply gratified in placing me here, and enriching me with the gifts and affections that he has done. Is there any lot that I would choose in preference to my own? Not one! Could the widest walk, could the most brilliant reputation—could cities, or courts, or Fortune in any of her many Protean splendours, tempt me to a single sigh? No! let me pass calmly the remainder of my days in the beloved scenes and with the beloved people I have so long shared it with, and they may write upon my tomb the epitaph of at least *one satisfied man.*

"I know not how it is; I cannot comprehend the feeling with which many quit this noble country for ever, for strange lands. And yet it may be said that hundreds do it every day; and for thousands it may indeed be well. For those who have had no prospect but the daily struggle for existence; for those whose minds have not been opened and quickened to a sense of the higher and more spiritual enjoyments which this country affords; for the labouring many, the valleys of Australia, or the vast forests and prairies of America, may be alluring. But to me,—and therefore, it seems, equally to other men

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with like tastes and attachments,—to quit England, noble, fearless, magnanimous, and Christian England, would be to cut asunder life, and hope, and happiness at once. No! till I voyage to 'the better land,' I could never quit England. What! after all the ages that have been spent in making it habitable and home-like; after all the blood shed in its defence, and for the maintaining of its civil polity; after all the consumption of patriotic thought and enterprise—the labours of philosophers, divines, and statesmen, to civilise and christianise it; after the time, the capital, the energies employed from age to age to cultivate its fields, dry up marshes, build bridges and lay down roads, raise cities, and fill every house with the products of the arts and the wealth of literature;—can there be a spot of earth that can pretend to a tithe of its advantages, or a spot that creates in the heart that higher tone necessary for their full enjoyment! Why, every spot of this island is sanctified, not only with the efforts of countless patriots, but as the birthplace and abode of men of genius. Go where you will, places present themselves to your eyes which are stamped with the memory of some one or other of

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those 'burning and shining lights' that have illuminated the atmosphere of England with their collective splendour, and made it visible to the men of farthest climates. Even in this secluded district,—which, beautiful as it is, is comparatively little known or spoken of amongst the generality of English people,—how many literary recollections surround you! To say nothing of the actors in great historical scenes; the Talbots, Shrewsburys, Dudleys, and Bagots of former ages; or the Ansons, Vernons, St. Vincents, and Pagets of the later and present ones;—in this county were born those excellent bishops Hurd and Newton, and the venerable antiquary and herald Elias Ashmole. To say nothing of the quantity of taste and knowledge that resides in the best classes of society hereabout, we have to-day passed the houses of Thomas Gisborne and Edward Cooper, clergymen who have done honour to their profession by their talents and the liberality of their sentiments. In that antiquated Fauld Hall, once dwelt old Squire Burton, the brother of the author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy;" and there is little doubt that some part of that remarkable work was written there. By

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that Dove, Izaak Walton, that pious old man, that lover of the fields, and historian of the worthies of the church, used to stroll and meditate, or converse with his friend Charles Cotton, a Staffordshireman too. In the woods of Wootton, which are very visible hence by daylight, once wandered a very different, but very distinguished person — the wayward Rousseau. In Uttoxeter, that great, but ill-used and ill-understood astronomer, Flamstead, received the greater part of his education; and from Lichfield, the spires of whose cathedral we have seen to-day, went out Johnson and Garrick, each to achieve supremacy in his own track of distinction. And there, too, lived Anna Seward, who, with all her egotism and faults of taste, was superior to the women of her age, and had the sagacity to perceive amongst the very first the dawning fame of Southey and Sir Walter Scott.

"If this comparatively obscure district can thus boast of having given birth or abode to so many influential intellects, what shall not England—entire and glory-crowned England? And who shall not feel proud to own himself of its race and kindred; and, if he can but secure for himself

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a moderate portion of its common goods, be happy to live and die in it !"

The spirit of patriotism seemed to have completely taken possession of the good old man. I never heard a discourse which carried me on with so kindling and absorbing a feeling, for my present recollection of it is a very faint and feeble one. As the carriage stopped, and Mr. Somers' tongue stopped with it, Elizabeth pressed my hand, and said in a whisper of evident emotion, "*Can* I help being proud of such a dear, good, true-hearted father ?"

We were at the vicarage, and the day in the forest was over ; but I would not exchange the recollection of it, simple and uneventful as it was, for that of the most brilliant display of city life in theatre or saloon, nor for the most exciting one of its assembled wit and intellect.

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WORTHIES OF WOOD LEIGHTON.

CAPTAIN KENROCK AND HIS SISTERS.

But who is this; what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems;
That so bedecked, ornate and gay,
Comes this way sailing,
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus or Gadire:
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving.

CAPTAIN KENROCK was the second son of "a worthy old gentleman, with a plentiful estate," in the neighbourhood of Wood Leighton, who had, besides him and his elder brother, two daughters. His brother was brought up as heir-apparent, and he himself was furnished with a midshipman's commission. In the course of a long and glorious naval service, he rose to the command of a vessel; and the death of his brother put the family estate into his possession.

His sisters were always distinguished by a striking difference in both person and mind. The elder, a light-complexioned girl, with flaxen hair

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and blue eyes, was a perfect fairy in form and activity. The first sight of her had always been much in her favour; a little further observation increased the prepossession. She had a liveliness, a precocity, and a coaxing manner, that won immediately upon the fancy: a little more knowledge of her spoiled the charm. The vanity of her disposition had been intolerable in a child. She had an affectation of knowing everything that any one present was speaking of; an impatience of instruction that disgusted her teachers; and when her mother's friends made any remark upon her juvenile specimens of work, she had a thousand reasons to prove that it was quite as well as it could be. With the servants she had the endearing epithets of "little minx" and "vixen;" and over her sister, a girl who had the misfortune to live before Dr. Cheshire had obliged the world with his glittering apparatus for training up the weaker plants of the human species, but one of the mildest and most affectionate of little creatures living, she ruled with a vigour and authority that remained unbroken, in spite of the frowns of her parents, and the lectures and cane of Goody Greatay.

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When about nineteen, she married the Reverend Joseph Malatrot, the rector of a neighbouring parish. He was a man of a grave and learned cast, and highly beloved by his parishioners. How the little minx, for such she was yet, came to win his heart, was the wonder of many. But that a pretty girl, with a smattering of a hundred descriptions of knowledge, of an honourable family, the admirer of Dr. Darwin, and the admired of Miss Seward, with a fortune of four thousand pounds, and a most cunning spirit withal, should charm a worthy priest, more erudite than shrewd, and a little indolent to boot, is perhaps no great wonder. Nevertheless, it would appear as though the reverend clerk had been visited by fancies of this kind himself in the course of their connubial career; for it is said that he was sorely disconcerted at times by the whimsical levity with which she would entertain company, and the malapert license with which she would break in upon some solemn discussion with his friends.

It was once thought that she designed to reduce the good man to the same state of passive obedience to which she had so successfully brought her sister; but he had a temper like steel, that

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would bend with a gentle pressure, but, if suddenly chafed, grew intolerably hot. One Sunday morning, so great was the bustle and commotion in the breakfast-room, that the servants were all agog with wonder and surmise; and when his reverence issued forth to the church, which was nearly half a mile distant, he was observed to appear greatly ruffled, and to look back at intervals with a certain fearfulness of glance. He arrived in a great flurry of spirits; made an apology of sudden indisposition for dismissing his congregation, whispered something to the clerk, who seemed to catch unusual activity from the communication, closed the doors as quickly as possible, and, putting the keys in his pocket, disappeared with his reverence another way. Scarcely were they gone, when Mrs. Malatrot made her appearance at the church in a most extraordinary style, her hair flying over her shoulders, and her whole dress in a very singular condition. On seeing the doors closed and the people departing, she gave a look of blank amazement, and returned with the same velocity with which she had come. Some censorious busy-bodies made no scruple of declaring that they believed the worthy rector had been

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beating his wife; others, that she had been the assailant: but the latter was most improbable, considering her elfin figure, and his height and becoming clerical bulk. But if my readers choose, they can adopt the version of the story which the clerk industriously promulgated, that Mr. Malatrot was suddenly seized with a violent pain at the heart, and his lady, alarmed for his safety, had followed him with a trepidation that made her regardless of her own appearance, or of anything but his security. Certain, however, it is that she always spoke of her dear Mr. Malatrot with the most superlative affection after this period, when we may suppose she was rendered more sensible of his value by the danger she had conceived him to be in. From this time, too, she was more accustomed to extol the profundity and variety of his erudition; and to excuse herself from any engagements to her friends, by alleging how deeply she was employed in studying a diversity of sciences with her dear Mr. Malatrot. So ardent indeed did her love of learning become, that she reduced her house and its vicinity to a solemn academic solitude. Not

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a bird was allowed to sing on a summer morning within its precincts. The gardener was up by two o'clock dislodging, with a long pole, any vociferous songster that filled a bush of the parsonage with its melody; the cat was banished to the bottom of the horsepond, because she spoiled the most contemplative hours by her continual purring like an old spinning-wheel, or by chasing the mice from one cupboard to another; and traps and poison were therefore in daily requisition to silence these mischievous little beasts, who soon became tenfold more riotous than ever, running behind closet and wainscot in every direction, to the inconceivable perplexity of the studious lady.

"Dear Mr. Malatrot," however, was attacked by a lingering complaint, for which a temporary residence in Wales was prescribed. A strange and not lightly to be credited rumour reached Wood Leighton respecting this journey; that not many stages' distance from home she assumed for themselves the economical character of a poor clergyman travelling to the sea-side in search of health; and on this plea, it is said, she obtained not only an abundant supply of money for the journey, but

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free entertainment from town to town. But neither sea air nor bathing, nor yet the attentions of their charitable friends, could keep life in the frame of the reverend invalid. He died at Aberystwith; and his lady declared she too should certainly have followed him, had not a Greek prince been fortunately wrecked on the coast just then, who beguiled her sorrow by teaching her Romaic. Many were the good lady's anecdotes of this sea-side sojourn. I heard her myself relate, that one day walking on the shore in a storm of wind and rain, a strong gale filled the umbrella with which she sheltered her minute person, and bore it away, she herself all the time keeping hold of the handle; that it was carried out to sea, she sitting in it as if it had been a boat; and though she allowed that, to be sure, the water did enter on all sides and considerably endamage her garments, yet she maintained this novel mode of sailing to be by no means unpleasant.

I have now by me a letter, written by her at this time to one of her Wood Leighton correspondents, which would infinitely delight a collector of autographs. Unfortunately the subject of it is busi-

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ness, the management of some fields and the collecting of rent, or I would edify my readers with its contents. It is addressed to "Neibor ——, Wood Leighton, Staffordshire, England:" for, learned as she was, she had particular whimseys of her own respecting orthography and geography, and writing from out of Wales she always directed her letters to England.

After the death of her husband, she assumed his style and titles, calling herself the Reverend Ann Malatrot, and returned to Oakland Hall, proposing to take up her residence with her brother and sister, Captain Kenrock and Miss Nelly. Nelly Kenrock still continued the same mild, affectionate being she had ever been; she was one of those beings who seem sent into the world to throw an awkward suspicion on the magnanimous asseverations of lovers, who cry "Mind! mind! oh, the charming mind!" but who act on the maxim, that a fair face is better than a sound head or a good heart. Poor Nelly had a mind amiable and inquiring, but nobody fell into raptures with its beauty; a heart as full of the bland and sweet affections as ever throbbed in a female bosom, but

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no disinterested intellectual lover sighed for its conquest. Miss Nelly's figure, all the world said, was against her; it had not risen perpendicularly enough to display the loveliness of the spirit within. The neighbouring gentlemen, however, were very civil to a person of such good family, and the ladies were kind: Miss Kenrock, all declared, was a good creature. The business of her life was to banish sickness and sorrow from the cottages of all her poor neighbours, and to attend to the management of the well-stocked menagerie and aviary which Oakland Hall was in a fair way of becoming. She had birds, beasts, fishes, and insects, all curious in their kind, and perpetually accumulating, for everybody was continually sending her some wonder of its species; so that Friesland hares, white peacocks, parrots, macaws, cats with five feet, dogs of the rarest breeds, and prodigies of accomplishments, poured in from all quarters.

Mrs. Malatrot represented to the captain, and even hinted to old Job the bailiff, that some more land must be added to the home-farm to support this motley breed, and in the end proposed to take the management of the affairs at the Hall

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upon herself. Her brother however replied, that he could not think of troubling his learned sister with the petty cares of his house ; and as to Nelly, poor thing ! she must have some amusement. The reverend lady therefore, either hopeless of pursuing her study in such a den of clean and unclean beasts as she found Oakland Hall to be, or offended by her unsuccessful attempt at power, purchased a house in Wood Leighton, not caring, as she said, to visit the Hall again.

Not long after we had taken up our residence at Wood Leighton, we found Mrs. Malatrot in the library at the vicarage, deep in a profound discussion on the lemna or duck-meat, which, she informed us, had been first made known to her by her learned friend Dr. Darwin ; an event, she said, which she could never forget, though she was then but a young girl sitting on a stool at Miss Seward's feet.

" Dear Anna Seward !" ejaculated she ; " the most intellectual, the most divinely endowed of women ! and who in her fond partiality used to call me ' the little angel !' Yes, Mrs. Howitt," continued she, with great emphasis, " there are many poets and poetesses now-a-days,—so at least

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they tell me, for I never read their trashy publications, — and there are many fine and accomplished women, I suppose; but there will never be another Miss Anna Seward, nor another Miss Honora Sneyd!"

Then followed a long history of that select society at Lichfield; of the letters that were there written, many extracts from which she gave from memory; and then, after all, what she called "a divine Sonnet on Sensibility, by the Sappho of Lichfield," which had never been published, the original copy of which she herself possessed, and would, she declared, be proud to show us if we would honour her with a call.

A few days afterwards we called, ostensibly to see this precious autograph, but, in reality, to see the lady at home. Her house we found in a narrow alley, well adapted by its gloom, silence, and seclusion for a philosophical retreat. We demanded admittance as well as we could, for there was neither bell nor knocker; and then, after waiting with that simple, conscious air which steals over one in such a situation, were just about to abandon the attempt, when a little girl, who understood the mode of access better than

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we did, ran up to the door, and knocked loudly upon it with a stone. The learned lady, in a trice, put her head out from an upper window to survey her visiters, and then was speedily with us, welcoming us with great courtesy into a room which might readily have been mistaken for an old furniture warehouse, for there were goods and chattels of all descriptions piled up, the produce of attendance on many an auction.

She conducted us up two flights of stairs, to a small room looking into the country, into which, she assured us, she admitted none but kindred souls. To feel the full flattery of the compliment, and to give perfect credit to the assertion, we had only to look round. A first glance convinced us that such vulgar beings as joiners, glaziers, or upholsterers, could not have been there for years. The window was as full of bundles of rags, pieces of pasteboard, and cobwebs, as of panes of glass. A carpet, thrown over an old plaster floor, was in a similar condition, permitting a view of broken places here and there, and trodden full of dust, or covered again with a remnant of old carpet of a different pattern, or even with humble sacking. By the fire stood an

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assemblage of crockery, of manifold patterns and manufactures, from a rich old china tea-pot to a common black mug. In these she prepared tea of herbs, of sovereign virtue in "strengthening the brain and fortifying the heart," as she herself expressed it. Above the fireplace, from a broken hole in the wall, depended a worsted string, which led us to suppose that such delicate little roasts as suited the intellectual lady were here also prepared. An old turned-oak chair, with a leathern seat, not the better for wear; a table, once probably scoured white, but now of a dingy colour, with one leg broken and lashed together with a cord; and an old carved chest without a lid, which, report said, was the bed of the learned lady,—constituted the principal furniture of this closet of the muses. Such was the abode of the Reverend Ann Malatrot; "the hallowed spot," as she called it, into which only were introduced the great in mind, in wealth, or birth. Of course we received the compliment as it deserved.

It was but a few days before, she informed us, that she had received a visit from two sons of a neighbouring nobleman, "a most delightful visit!" "The feast of reason and the flow of soul"

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had so entirely absorbed them, that one of them in descending the stairs had set his foot in a mutton-pie ready for the oven.

I wish these, my histories of Wood Leighton Worthies, could be embellished with woodcuts: then would I present my excellent readers with a faithful sketch of the reverend lady, in full costume as she marched yearly at the head of the Odd Fellows' Club; her short, broad figure, literally as broad as high, mounted on high-heeled shoes; in a black satin gown, a quaintly-cut green stuff mantle; a bouquet of the most showy flowers, sunflowers, yellow lilies, and roses, blazing up to her chin; with a long walking-staff in her hand, her invariable out-of-doors companion, of such wonderful thickness as to remind the looker-on of a bed-post, and which overtopped her head many inches; her head covered with a little black bonnet, scarcely large enough to screen her remarkably fair-complexioned face, and leaving strikingly conspicuous the light-blue eyes, and the yet unblanched flaxen hair, turned up over a cushion in front in the olden style. Never had the odd fraternity so orthodox a member; and never was procession honoured with so much

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attention as theirs, with the Reverend Ann Malatrot at their head. Of this club she had been a member for some years, having intimated, by a written application, that she conceived herself justly entitled to membership with their honourable body; a sentiment which was received with an uproar of applause, and adopted with reiterated acclamation, a special rule being made in her favour.

My readers may perhaps imagine that so extraordinary a person must have been insane: no such thing—it was the mere extravagance of eccentric character running wild in an out-of-the-world place like Wood Leighton. She was known by everybody, and might be occasionally met at the most respectable houses in the neighbourhood, if not an honoured, at least an accepted guest.

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CAPTAIN KENROCK.

CAPTAIN KENROCK had resigned his commission, and been a constant resident at Oakland Hall for more than fifteen years when we removed to Wood Leighton, and had settled down into the habits of the gentry, with whom he associated, as completely as if he had never left the neighbourhood. He had a candour and cordiality of disposition that made him welcome everywhere; and his martial fame, his loyalty, his knowledge of the world, and ample estate, gave great weight to his character. In Wood Leighton he was seldom seen, except at the justice-room, or at a county election, when he was always a warm and successful canvasser for the friend of administration; so that his tall, manly figure, arrayed in his long blue coat, his cocked-hat, powdered hair, and ample queue, were never beheld there without some known or imagined cause of importance. Coursing and hawking were his chief delight; and in these amusements, a neighbour of his,

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of whom we shall have to speak anon, Squire Traintree, as he was invariably called, and Mr. Pope, were his principal companions. So accustomed, indeed, were they to each other's society, that seldom a day passed without their meeting somewhere; and if they walked out of their own houses, their feet mechanically turned towards the residence of one of the two. They traversed more ground over every day, particularly the captain and Mr. Pope, (for the squire was often busy in his plantations,) than any other men in the county; and there was scarcely a hare or a covey of partridges within the two manors of which they were the lords, though they abounded in game, but they knew their haunts and numbers. There never in the world was a more regular company than these three worthy gentlemen; for though the captain was inclined to conviviality, his friends were remarkably temperate; and the captain had an unfortunate failing, which would have most probably made them sober had they been otherwise inclined. He had never married; why, it was wondered, for he was a great admirer of the ladies, and a universal favourite with them. But it was said, that in

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his younger days he had been strongly attached to a fair one, with whom he was on the eve of marriage, when he was suddenly called to sea; and, on his return, found the lady in precisely the same circumstances with another wooer. A duel was the consequence, in which he was doubly wounded — by his rival's ball, and his rival's subsequent marriage with the false lady.

After this time, whenever the captain was warm with wine, pistols and duels ran strongly in his head, and he challenged whoever was near him. He had put his friends Mr. Pope and the squire into a horrible panic by a display of this kind before they were aware of this trait in his character; and had not Jerry, an old sailor, who always attended him in the double capacity of valet and grand falconer, stepped in, the affair might have had a more serious termination.

They were enjoying a glowing hearth after a long day's course; the bottle was circling cheerfully, and the transactions of the day were passing in animated review; when the captain suddenly took offence, nobody knew why. His face kindled into rage; he started from his seat, uttering a volley of oaths, and dashing the glasses from the table

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before him, instantaneously produced a brace of pistols, and presenting one to Squire Traintree, demanded satisfaction. Expostulation, explanation were in vain; the captain stood over them like a fury, presenting the pistol, and menacing death, when Jerry rushed in, swearing as desperately as his master, and snatching the pistol which the squire reluctantly held, aimed it at the captain's head. But the fury was over; the lion was quelled; the dreadful man darted at once out of the room, and clapping the door behind him, left the two guests in a state of feeling far from the calmest.

This unhappy affair made a breach between the captain and his friends which slowly and with difficulty closed. Jerry was sent day after day, for month after month, with apologies and assurances that nothing of the kind should ever occur again; but the panic was not soon to be overcome, and even mutual friends interfered to bring about a reconciliation, but in vain. At length, however, they met by accident; they took a course together, but not for a kingdom would they enter under a roof with him. But by degrees their meetings became more frequent: old habits were

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in some measure resumed; but though they ventured at length to sit with him, they slunk away if the bottle was introduced, as if it had been a viper; and many a year was it before they ventured to prolong their stay till evening, or could see their excitable neighbour take a glass without feeling an oppression at their chests, and looking to see if Jerry were at hand, or a door open through which they might make their escape; nor did they ever fail in taking leave of the old warrior at extremely cool and creditable hours. Perhaps, however, they had no cause of fear. The captain was so mortified at the circumstance, that he determined never to exceed a certain number of glasses: and so religiously did he adhere to it, that although an indulgence would have indubitably produced the same consequences, such symptoms were scarcely ever afterwards witnessed: and moreover, Jerry, who dreaded the breaking up of their sporting parties, kept a vigilant eye upon him on such occasions.

This Jerry,—another name he probably had, though he never was called by any other, and he perhaps had forgotten it himself, for his memory, though good enough in most particulars, was

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strangely deficient in others—whatever he was about occupied him so completely as to make him lose sight and sense of everything else. If he were busy and pulled off his hat for coolness, it was generally left; if he took out his knife to cut a stick or alter a dog-collar, he would stick it in a bank or the bark of a tree that happened to be near him, and there it remained;—nay, even old Trotter, which he rode on errands to Wood Leighton, has been frequently brought after him by the lads, from somebody's door, where he had left it standing, and walked home. This Jerry, however, was a sailor, about ten years younger than the captain; had been his servant almost twenty years—been at his side in many a battle and storm, and was too much a part of the captain's self for him to be able to live without him. Jerry, unlike his master, was married; had married, after his sea-service was over, the very woman he had courted in his younger years, and lived now in a cottage adjoining Oakland Hall; at least, his wife lived there,—Jerry's true home was at the Hall. He was an odd mixture of good-nature, levity, forgetfulness, and affection; a jolly, drinking, swearing roysterer, but a punctual and reverent

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attender of church; like his master, a stanch supporter of church and state; a moralizer in his way amongst his ancient cronies, with a jug in his hand, and enforcing his pious observations with an oath. However, he was the life and soul of the Hall, and had an authority over the captain which he scarcely knew himself. He had a comic gravity and an arch simplicity, which enabled him to use with impunity, and even with approbation, freedoms in his behaviour and jokes in his language, which in another would have given intolerable offence; and the servants fell into his whims with but one observation, that "Jerry was an odd pea, and must e'en roll his own way."

The business of his life was falconry, the hobby of his master and not less his own. He trained and led the hawks, and had been several journeys into Germany and Flanders for casts of the finest birds, and had a long roll of technical terms, lures and jesses, lanerets and carvers, manning and reclaiming, and so on, as unintelligible as his naval phraseology to his general auditors. But his skill, the fondness the birds showed for him, the command he had over them, and the wonderful dexterity with which they struck down the quarry, were

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the admiration of the country; and he and his worshipful master might often be said to resemble in their processions the Emperor of China in his, with his grand falconer and a thousand subsidiary officers, for they had frequently at their heels half the population of the country for five miles round.

In these exercises they had another constant attendant—the keeper. His history is a chapter in human nature, and at the same time a proof of the goodness of the captain's heart. Ned Seymour, for so he was called, had been born to a property of about ten thousand pounds in an adjacent parish. He was described as being formerly remarkable for his noble person, and traces of his good looks still remained about him: he had been generous and open-hearted, with a certain fascination in his conversation, which had made him for the time a prodigious favourite with the lower gentry of his neighbourhood. His company was courted, his liberality was unbounded, and his house the general resort. This was a style of living that could not last—his property vanished, and in a while so did he. His comrades, after the first inquiry, "What can have be-

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come of Ned Seymour?" thought no more of him, till about five years afterwards he made his appearance, emaciated, dispirited, and shabbily-dressed, to solicit the place of gamekeeper, with a salary of forty pounds a year, which his former associates were authorised to give by the lord of the manor—a nobleman who resided at a distance, and presented to them the game. Captain Kenrock and Squire Traintree interested themselves warmly in his behalf, and attended the meeting appointed for the nomination of the keeper. They waited for some time in expectation of some of Seymour's old friends proposing him; but as he was not mentioned, the squire reminded them of him. There was a general silence for some time; at length a red-faced gentleman farmer, drawing the pipe from his mouth, scratching his head, and spitting between his teeth into the fire, gave a shrug, and resting his elbows on the arms of his chair, and looking very sagaciously on his gaiters, said, "I'm sorry for Seymour, to be sure; he's badly off, but it's his own fault; and for my part, I can hardly think of his having the place. We've all sat at his table—and I must say he always kept a good one; he's sat at our's too; but, you

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see, it will be an awkward thing to order him about as our keeper, after he has been like one of ourselves!"

This appeared the general sentiment. The captain's face reddened to scarlet; he started up, and striking the table before him till the glasses danced and the pipes broke in two, "What!" he exclaimed, with a tremendous naval oath, "because the poor fellow has treated you like princes, you 'll starve him to death! Who is it but you, ungrateful scoundrels! that have brought him to his present condition? And now, forsooth, you cannot bear to see him your servant—but you can bear to drive him out of your sight without a penny in his pocket or a friend in the world! I tell you, he shall never owe you a groat!"

With this he and Squire Traintree left the meeting together, the people being in blank amaze, and with no small misgivings of mind at their worships' anger; for they, as magistrates of the district, with considerable influence at the sessions, and with some interest too with his lordship, might bring about consequences extremely undesirable. A messenger was therefore despatched with all speed, to inform their worships that Ned

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should have the place; but he was already appointed head-keeper over the two lordships of Oaklands and Bellevue. This was another stroke: for it was well known that Seymour was one of the best sportsmen in the county; and that he was not only acquainted with all the haunts of the game in their lordships, but was a most perfect adept in all the ways of destroying it;—jugging partridges by night with a stalking-horse; taking hares by gins, pipe, or net; dropping pheasants from their roosts with sulphur; and, in short, in all the practices of the expert poachers: and if his revenge should lead him that way, not a feather or hairy foot would soon be found in their manor.

Whether this was the case is not for us to say; but certain it is, though Seymour was never detected in such practices, that the game-bags of these gentlemen grew lighter and lighter each succeeding season, though their rounds grew longer and longer.

Seymour's cottage was near Jerry's, but he was seldom to be found there; his home was at one of the two Halls, between which he alternated pretty equally. He had happily learned an art,

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perhaps the most difficult of all—without seeming degraded in his new situation, to behave with the utmost respect to his masters, yet with a degree of familiarity which they encouraged, and he was equally careful not to abuse. He gradually recovered a portion of his spirits and personal appearance, but not all. There was a trace of untimely age in his countenance, and a gravity in his manner, which told of past sorrow and hardship. He was a fine fellow after all, and I never could see him without thinking of the heir of Linne.

After all, perhaps Ned Seymour never was much happier in his life. He had learned to know himself and to know the world; he had found much cold ingratitude in it, but some instances of honour and goodness that were doubly endeared to him, and redeemed human nature in his eyes. His masters were his friends and his companions; rural sports, the pleasure of his life, his only business. Jerry and he, as might be expected, became almost inseparable friends, and pursued their avocations with a zest that none but such characters can possibly feel.

In the winter evenings they were generally to

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be found in the kitchen of Oakland Hall, busied in a world of employments: sometimes up to the knees in chips and straw, one splitting and preparing long runners of the wild briar, and the other stitching whisps of straw together with them into bee-hives; or they were cleaning guns and casting bullets; shaping short lengths of split willow-poles into mole-traps, and fitting them up with proper pegs and strings; making or repairing nets; twisting fishing-lines; making artificial flies; or stuffing some beautiful bird, which Seymour had shot in his rounds, for Miss Nelly; whilst Ned recounted his adventures in his five years' wanderings, or Jerry told dreadful tales of storms and sea-fights, boarding vessels, firing ports, and cleaving Frenchmen's heads—or hummed over a scrap of "Black-eyed Susan," or "Admiral Hosier's Ghost."

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VISIT TO OAKLAND HALL.

All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear;
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling.

STRUTT.

"AND where shall we go to-day?" asked we one morning in September, as we sat at our breakfast-table. We had gone the whole round of the neighbourhood; its more immediate walks, the Timber-lane, the Meadows, the woody ridge opposite our windows—all were as familiar to us as our own garden paths; and now, though nothing new invited us in any particular direction, yet so much that was interesting and delightful presented itself on all hands, that a selection was difficult. "Should we go to Bramshal Wood?"—"Oh no, that was not far enough."—"To Eaton Banks?" The same objection existed there. "It was a morning for a long stroll; every lane, and

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field, and hill, was full of autumnal beauty. Who would be contented with such walks as these walks, only to be taken in the heat of summer? What hindered but that we should take our little carriage, and the children too, and drive somewhere — to the Forest, or to Bagot's Woods, or to the old park at Chartley?"

After half an hour of eager discussion, and one of us recommending this place, and another that,— and our finding, after all, that to each of them, charming though they each were, there existed some reason why on that particular morning we should not go there,—we all at once decided that we would go to Oakland Hall, to call on our acquaintance the Kenrocks; and moreover, that we would not drive, but walk the whole four miles, over the hill by Eaton. We did so; and a charming stroll we had, the children enjoying it as much as ourselves,—nay, if exclamations and eager runnings to and fro be signs of the degrees of enjoyment, even more than ourselves.

This was by no means our first visit to Oakland; but as we have not hitherto spoken of it at length to our readers, we must describe it to

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them. But, in the first place, we will begin with the morning. A brisk gale was abroad, tossing the already tinted foliage of the trees and hedges on every side, giving a lively animation to the scene; and where the leaves were sheltered from the wind and at rest, the sun filled their polished surfaces with a shower of light. Above, the sky shone with a blue lustre and transparency that is peculiar to this season, and clouds like piles of snow sailed slowly along in distant groups. The scenes all round us shone out through the same diaphanous atmosphere, every object appearing nearer to the eye; so much so, that every farmhouse, tree, and animal, to a great distance, were distinctly and beautifully visible. The towers of the village-churches, in particular, rose in strong relief against the clear blue ether beyond, which was sometimes seen gleaming through the opposite belfry windows. From some of the fields the corn was already gathered; others were embossed with thickly-scattered shocks; in others, again, the laden waggons were moving along; and, at intervals, we paused to watch, at a considerable distance, sheaf after sheaf glance in the sun as it was launched from the wain into the barn.

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not a bird's note was heard, excepting the casual tweedle of a lark as it rose from the ground, essaying a short ascent and then dropping again; or the twitter of a flock of linnets settling in a neighbouring stubble.

The verdure of the mown fields was intense and beautiful; but the pastures wore a melancholy aspect—that particular aspect of overgrowth and decay which gives sadness and an air of desolation to the autumn landscape; tussocks of grass rank and dark grew over them, with plots of thistles and ragwort, whose downy seeds the wind was stealing and bearing away on all sides. The flowers of summer were gone, and instead were to be seen a few blue scabiouses, the bells of the foxglove flowering on the tops of their long waving stalks, or the broad leaves of the colts-foot turning up their silvery undersides to the wind. Instead of the honeysuckle flowers, its clusters of red transparent berries were left; instead of the wild rose, the scarlet hip, and those mossy crimson-tufts, the cells of larvæ, which every child has delighted to gather spite of the thorny stems upon which they fix themselves. But if the more showy land-flowers were gone,

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But if the more showy land-flowers were gone, the little streams and the field-ponds presented their most beautiful growth,—the finely-plumed reeds, which rustled with a dry whispering sound as the wind passed among them, waving gracefully their feathered heads of a deep moroon colour, or shaking with a solemn and stately motion the heavy, black mace-like typhas, worthy to be the sceptre of some Kugelborn himself.

As we went on, many were the groups of gleaners we saw; ancient dames, and brown peasant women, their arms defended by sleeves that "once upon a time" were stockings, and their aprons pinned up to hold the ears of corn that were too short to tie together in a sheaf. Many were the picturesque children, too, shy, sunburnt urchins, each with a little open bag before it for its gleanings; but whose blackberry-stained lips told that there were jetty clusters in the hedges even more attractive perhaps than the yellow ears of corn.

The whole collected scene was at once bright and melancholy;—yes, melancholy; for let the autumn day be golden with sunshine as it may—let busy bands of reapers and merry gleaners

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surround us,—there is a silence, a sense of a pleasure passing away—of maturity, decay, and death, which, whether we think of it or not, will make us melancholy. There is something, too, in autumn that sends back the heart among old memories; it is full of associations,—associations which every year accumulate, and cast a yet stronger charm about us; and we that day strolled slowly in the silent indulgence of that fulness of heart, that cogitative mood of spirit, till Oakland Hall stood before us.

The situation of this old mansion is the most sequestered that can be imagined. It stands in a woody hollow, surrounded on three sides by hills of a considerable height, that, a little below the Hall, abruptly wind away to the right and left, and leave a wide prospect of rich and varied country, bounded by the Forest of Needwood. The Hall is a venerable old building of framed timber, kept in excellent repair, and fronting two ways; the upper stories projecting considerably beyond the lower, and the roof terminating in a row of gables over each front, each gable containing a window. The principal front is towards the north, having a view of the uplands which ter-

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minate the hollow, of rich but uneven enclosures, scattered with clumps of noble oaks. About fifty yards from this front runs the road through the adjoining village; and upon this road open a pair of large gates, with posts surmounted with massy urns. A grass-plot, round which runs the carriage-road, leads to the house. One side of this grassy court is bounded by the outbuildings, which are nearly concealed by a thick plantation; on the other rises a group of lofty elms, casting their cool shadows athwart the green, and overtopping the chimneys of the Hall, and partly concealing the view of the churchyard, which is only separated by a low box-hedge. The south front looks into an ample garden, enclosed by a fosse, and containing fruit-trees, laurels, bays, junipers, and every kind of garden evergreen; which, from their immense size and sturdy growth, must have stood since the time the garden was first laid out. In one of the farther corners is a building called the Summer-house, of two stories, and surmounted with a curious ancient vane, representing the supporters of the family, and commanding a fine view of the country;—this place Jerry had taken possession of for his hawks and their

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appendages;—and below this lies a succession of fish-ponds.

Not a more delightful picture of old English wealth, embosomed in beauty and tranquillity, can be imagined than is presented on looking down on Oakland Hall, with its church and churchyard, its small dependent village, half-lost amongst a profusion of trees and the luxuriance of cottage-gardens, from the side by which we made our approach.

The church certainly is not the most diminutive one that ever was erected, because we have ourselves seen one less, and have heard of the smallest church in England somewhere in Hampshire, or otherwise we might have declared this to be the one. It is indeed singularly small; but both it and the churchyard, a small square plot, enclosed with a low, clipt hedge, are most exquisitely neat and clean. The tower is square and low; and an immense ivy, springing from a strong stem from a corner formed by a butment, stretches its luxuriant foliage over it; taking, at the same time, the porch in its embrace, as if to protect both from danger. The churchyard contains but few graves, yet there is one which excited in

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my mind the strongest interest, though I could get no satisfactory information respecting it. The grave has no stone of memorial whatever, but from the centre of it springs a fine thorn-tree. I never could see this grave without remembering that usual termination of old love ballads.

> "The one was buried outside the church,
> The other within the quire;
> And out of one grave there sprang a birk,
> And out of the other a briar."

There was a fellow grave to this, and there was a history could I but have known it. Of this I was sure, but my inquiries were fruitless. I could have written a story about it, but in this my veracious chronicle it would not have done to relate my own fancies — my friend Mr. Pope himself would have written an elaborate epistle to Sylvanus Urban, to undeceive the public, and therefore I am compelled to leave the grave as I found it, without a legend. Whatever had been the sorrow or suffering of the heart that mouldered there, its last, long home had been well chosen, — the very place seemed full of a holy quiet; and when I looked round upon its greenness and inviolate

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quiet, and called to mind the crowded, trodden, and noisy burial-places of cities, it seemed something of consequence to have so pleasant a corner to sleep the long sleep in.

Passing through the churchyard, we reached the gate of the Hall: and scarcely had we entered, when a fine black Newfoundland dog, which lay at the door, rose, and came plodding with majestic steps and a stately swing of his tail, to meet us. Up the front of the house were trained jasmines, creepers of all kinds, and pyracanthas with their clusters of berries; and here and there hung cages of many varieties of birds; and a couple of tame peewits seeing us approach, trotted nimbly down the walk to conceal themselves.

We found the captain, to our regret, gone to the fields. But Miss Kenrock, or Miss Nelly as she was more generally called, received us with an overflow of kindness, lamenting the absence of her brother as much as ourselves; and then, after she had made us partake of her cake, her gingerbread, her patties and tarts of every variety, and made us drink Constantia, which wine she declared she herself thought preferable to her own

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damson, she took us to her own apartment, to amuse us, as she said, with her creatures; which, according to her opinion, were quite as well worth being seen as her brother's, though he would not allow them the range of the house, but insisted on their being confined to those rooms which she particularly called her own. All this we knew; and when our readers have heard what we saw and what happened to us there, they will agree with us that Captain Kenrock had reason on his side. The room we were ushered into was a large, pleasant one, with airy, cheerful windows opening to the garden, but wire blinds secured the open casements, and the whole room had a kind of menagerie odour not the most delicious in the world. The mantel-piece, of beautifully carved oak, was filled with glass cases, containing stuffed birds, and small animals of various descriptions, each of which had a separate history. On one side hung a cage, containing a family of white mice,—and above, a larger one of turtle-doves; and on the other side were likewise two cages in similar positions, one inhabited by a prating, noisy cockatoo,—the other by a parrot, more loquacious, which asked us how we did,

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where we came from, how old we were, and whether we did not think him very clever. Nothing could exceed the delight of the children; and kind-hearted Miss Nelly seeing their pleasure, made the parrot talk still more, till we were almost deafened with her noise.

We were requested to seat ourselves on a sofa; but no sooner had we done this, than an angry growl from under it made us start up again. "Be quiet, Fan!" said Miss Nelly: "pray be seated, and never mind her; she has pups, and it makes her cross." We resumed our seats, and Miss Nelly took the young gentleman to see a sick poodle of wonderful abilities, which was lying in a cradle in one corner of the room: and at the very moment that the boy had his head inclined forward, a little leather-faced monkey, who was perhaps jealous of his mistress bestowing her attentions on a stranger, perched upon his shoulder, and saluted him with a jabber and a grin. "Oh, Tippoo, you unmannerly wretch!" exclaimed Miss Nelly; and the monkey, with more submission than I expected, decamped to his box in the corner. The boy, however, terrified at so sudden an assault, flew to a large cushioned chair

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on the opposite side; when Miss Nelly shrieked and ran after him, drawing him back with gentle violence. But it was too late: the little fellow drew a loose cover of the cushion after him, and up started a couple of Guinea-pigs, which squeaked, bolted upon the floor, and scampered about the room. The panic became general: Fan protruded her pug nose from under the sofa, barking and yaffling outrageously; the parrot squalled; the poor sick poodle himself lifted up his head and barked also; Tippoo leapt upon his box, and then upon the top of a japan cabinet, grinning and chattering hideously; Miss Nelly the while chiding and coaxing, in a vain endeavour to restore peace among her agitated subjects.

Right glad were we all to make our escape; and then, as the captain still had not made his appearance, we left this turbulent company to compose themselves, and adjourned to the yard, where, our hostess assured us, we should meet with no more annoyances: and indeed poor Miss Nelly seemed so disconcerted by what had happened, that we were fain to show more willingness to be pleased, more interest in all she could show us, in order to make her, kind soul as she was! satisfied with

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herself. No sooner had she entered the yard, than she was welcomed by a combination of cries, screams, and cackles, which, by her smiles, and her discourse, addressed to feathered, furred, and bristled creatures, one might suppose she thought excellent music.

Along one side of the yard was a row of kennels, containing an impatient and clamorous race of the captain's pointers, terriers, and ferrets; and his sister's-rabbits, tame hares, and Chinese pigs, which she admired for their solid hoofs, like asses'. In one place a fox was confined by a chain to his kennel, and was tracing his beaten round, chattering and showing his teeth amidst an assemblage of fowls from every quarter of the globe, which knowing his well-worn limits, marched past in heedless indifference, picking up grains of corn within half an inch of his nose. There were peacocks spreading their gorgeous expanse of tail, and uttering their cat-like cries, from which their mistress prognosticated a change in the weather; turkeys indulging a similar vanity, hoisting their more diminutive and sober-hued circumference of train, running forward suddenly, grinding their wings against the

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ground, and venting a hollow sound like a cork forced from a bottle. Guinea-fowls there were shouting "Come back!"—ducks, overgrown English and Muscovite, bowing politely; geese hissing, and hens of all feathers and sizes cackling together. Besides these, and a multitude of pigeons, carriers, tumblers, and fantails, was the famous Ralph the raven, and his dapper comrade Gyp the jackdaw—two of the most consummately-impudent thieves, as Miss Nelly averred, in ten counties. It was only that very morning that Gyp had carried off a silver spoon to the top of the barn, where, digging too deep in the thatch to bury it, it had fallen through upon the head of the man within, and led to the discovery, not only of the stolen spoon, but of some dozen articles besides which the villanous bird had hidden there for years.

We had just come to the end of this relation, and were turning with the children to examine an unfortunate race of animals impaled on the barn-end,—wild-cats, polecats, weasels, magpies, jays, and herons,—when our good friend the captain appeared, and shaking us heartily by the hand, gave the history of the taking of many

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of them. This done, he informed us that Jerry and Seymour were going out with the hawks and pointers; and if we did not object, he should like us to be witness of the sport; and that a leash of his most experienced birds should start a covey of partridges within the limits beyond which he usually commenced his sport, so that we might see a flight without any fatigue. Nothing could have been more to our wishes than this proposal: we accordingly joined the two sportsmen, to whom the captain had already given orders. *En passant*, we could not but observe the contrast there was between the persons of these two men. Jerry was a low-built, stout sailor, in his blue jacket, wide trousers and black handkerchief, with an expression of countenance between vacancy and mirth; a hat, of which nobody could tell the front, stuck upon a head of wild black hair which might not have been trimmed for the last twelve months: Seymour, a tall, manly figure, in his shooting-jacket, with so much of the gentleman in his manner and language, that you could not remember that he was the keeper.

The captain said that a brace of merlins would

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have made us nobler sport with a lark; but the flight might continue longer than we might like to witness it. And with these words came the sense to me that we were about to inflict pain and death upon a living, joyful creature, for our own sport. My heart accused me; but curiosity was stronger than pity. I said to myself, it was *but for that once*, to see a specimen of a noble, picturesque, and disused art; and if they were not killed to-day by the captain's hawks, they might be killed to-morrow by Seymour's powder and shot; and therefore what could it matter? It is thus that we have sophistry ready for all purposes; and with a silenced if not satisfied mind I went on.

The children were delighted with the sharp and cunning-looking birds, that, unhooded, would permit them to stroke and handle them with the utmost docility, showing not the least disposition to escape, except to the wrist of the captain or Jerry, whimpering and cowering as if for very fondness.

We were now arrived in a stubble-field at a considerable distance from the Hall, when the dogs made a point, a covey of partridges was put up, and the hawks were in the air. The par-

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tridges, that at first flew steadily along, on perceiving their foes, squandered in every direction with amazing velocity; and the hawks, as if mad with joy at their escape, were fluttering and playing such a variety of antics in the air, that at first I began to suspect the captain was deceived in his birds: but at once, as if recovering themselves, they darted down with the rapidity of an arrow, and in a moment each was seen on the ground with its prey. The captain and his men had been running forwards mean time, whilst we stood gazing from the spot where the hawks had commenced their flight; and on coming up, we found Seymour and Jerry, each with a partridge in his hand, regaling the birds with part of their entrails. This truly was the *unpoetical* part of the sport. Next a piece of turnip-land was beaten, whence a hare was started; a hawk was tossed, and they were both beyond the field in a second. On hurried the sportsmen, and we followed; but before we reached the hedge, a piercing scream was heard, and Jerry shouted "She 's there!" We entered the field; and there was the poor hare a little beyond, running round and round, shrieking most dismally, whilst the fierce bird

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rode on its head, buffeting it with its wings, and tearing its eyes from the sockets. My enthusiasm was over — it might be fine sport, but it was not to my taste. The captain, however, too keen a sportsman to think about aught save his sport, never dreamed for a moment but that we were as delighted as himself; and as we leisurely returned to the Hall, launched forth most eloquently on the pleasures and advantages of his ancient and honourable art. He quoted authors and cited passages, of which unfortunately much of the wisdom was lost to us from the learned phraseology in which they were expressed,—for he was true to the letter of his old authors, and must have been at great pains to impress them on his memory. A deal, too, he said about the divine verses of the Hierascosophion, and of the proofs of good taste our ancestors gave by their attachment to this royal sport, when the wrists of princes and noble ladies were the perches of the sagacious birds, and the noble race of falcons was preserved by regal mandates and legislative enactments.

"Nothing," said he, "demonstrates the degeneracy of the present age more than its neglect

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of this finest of all sports; or the superior judgment of some of our Continental neighbours, and of the Asiatic nations, than its continuance amongst them. The spirit of the true sportsman is rarely now to be found: anybody can knock down game with a gun; but, to be a true sportsman, requires a skill, a patience, a *soul* beyond this;—in the best sense of the word, a sportsman ought to be a *noble* man. The invention of gunpowder was the degradation of the noble art of falconry—an art which is humane as it is noble. Instead of scattering shots and wounds amongst dozens of birds,—instead of firing madly and wantonly at a distance which permits you to lame but not to kill, and so sending away, in the course of a day's sport, scores with lacerated limbs, which, from their habits of flight and natural activity, must give inconceivable and lingering torment, —the practice of falconry is but an indulgence of that contention between the creatures for which Nature herself has formed them; for which she has given them dispositions and instincts, and from which no protracted tortures, no crippled wretches ensue,—for the only alternatives are instant death or clear escape."

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The captain had proceeded in his harangue without admitting or expecting a reply; — it was like a speech written for the occasion: the last words brought us to the Hall door.

Our friends would not permit us to return without dinner; and in the evening, well pleased with our day's excursion, we walked back to Wood Leighton, the harvest-moon shining brightly in the higher sky long before we reached our own door.

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN KENROCK.

Not many weeks after our visit to Oakland Hall, Captain Kenrock was visited by a fit of the gout, brought on, it was supposed, by his assisting at a perambulation of parish boundaries which had taken place shortly after, and on which occasion he had given way to the general jollity; though, to the surprise of all, he had exhibited no stronger features of madness than the rest of the company.

It was conjectured by his learned apothecary

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that the turbulent humour had taken a downward course, as he presumed, owing to particular circumstances; and of a truth it might be so, for it produced as much irritation in that remote region, and gave rise to as much inequality of temper, as it could possibly have done in the brain. The poor captain, like many another wiser man in such a situation, became unreasonably peevish and hard to please. The servants approached him with fear and caution, trembled at a summons, and returned from his presence with as much agility as if they had encountered a lion broken loose. Jerry's patience was stretched till it many a time snapped with an oath; and good Miss Nelly was harassed and perplexed till she melted into tears. When the fit was over, he expressed great compunction for these outrages; but the paroxysm returned, and with it all his asperity of temper. Poor Miss Nelly generally endeavoured to appease his anger, and soothe him into patience; but, on finding her exertions unavailing, would retire to her own room, and her more temperate company. Unfortunately the captain could not bear to be left alone; and then fancying that his sister's apartment was more light and cheerful,

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resolved to be there too. Miss Nelly was in a horror at the idea, and used all her arguments to dissuade him, foreseeing fatal consequences; but the more she opposed, the more he was determined, and accordingly his chair was wheeled in. Scarcely was the poor testy gentleman established in the exact angle of the window which he thought commanded the best view, when that little harpy of a monkey sallied forth from his box, and seized him by the inflamed foot. The captain roared with pain; Miss Nelly sprang to his assistance, and Tippoo lay sprawling on the floor with a blow from the captain's staff. Alas, poor Tippoo! But he was not dead; he leapt up the next moment, and flew into his box, shutting the door after him. Kind-hearted Miss Nelly was divided between pity for her favourite and sympathy with her brother, and to prevent the recurrence of so unfortunate an incident, carried the chastised little wretch into the garden. Scarcely, however, was Tippoo gone, than fresh enemies appeared: Fan's pups were now grown large, and came rushing, romping, and tumbling one over the other, snarling and shaking each other by their long ears, till they too felt the

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weight of the captain's staff; and then their mistress was obliged to remove them into the kitchen. Miss Nelly besought her brother to return to his own apartments; but he declared that, spite of her troublesome inmates, he liked this room better than any other in the house; and the next moment he quarrelled with the parrot. She was banished, together with the cockatoo; and then he grew quite melancholy with the dolorous cooing of the turtle-doves; and Miss Nelly, all kindness and concession, had them too removed away. A few hours went on; his sister was silent, the room seemed solitary, and he felt an inclination to return to his own parlour.

His chair was wheeled back, and set to an inch on the spot it had occupied before. It would not do; it was removed to the window—the view was tempting; it was removed to the garden, but the garden was cold. It was drawn back to the fire—the fire was too large; twenty changes were made, but nothing would do—the gout still continued within doors or without, seated by the window or before the fire, and nothing could allay his perturbation of spirit. "I wish I had it instead of him," thought poor Miss Nelly

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many a time; "I could bear it so much better than he!"

Even when the pressure of the complaint seemed somewhat removed, it left a languor, attended by a querulousness of temper, equally distressing; and sad and wearisome was his sister's situation: to Jerry only did she complain, and he comforted her to the best of his ability.

"Keep a good heart, madam; it's a hard case, to be sure; but never fear—the storm will blow over presently!"

In truth, however, Jerry was ill at ease himself: he was grieved to see his old master's disorder, and his want of patience under it, and many were the outbreaks of passion which he had to bear in his own person; but ten times more was he grieved for good Miss Nelly, whose tender heart and assiduous attentions he often saw wounded and rewarded by petulant ill-humour: and filled with sympathy for her, he went into the summer-house and cried for pity.

One fine morning, as he drew his master out in his chair along the lawn at a distance from the Hall and out of its view, he passed the wheel, as by accident, over a little mound, and turned the

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captain gently over upon the side of a steep mossy bank. His alarm and anger were indescribable. So furious were his exclamations and violent his struggles to raise himself, that Jerry began to be seriously afraid. But seeing, at length, that Jerry did not attempt to assist him, and knowing that they were in a situation where they could not be heard from the house, he became more gentle in his efforts, and vented his wrath in vows of a thousand different vengeances against his luckless falconer. Jerry at length broke out:

"Does your honour think I would upset you on purpose? D 'ye think I 'd serve you all these years to be the death of you at last? I would not hurt a hair of your honour's head!"

"Lift me out then!" exclaimed the captain.

"Your honour knows I would never hurt you," continued Jerry, still standing at a distance; "but as you *are* there, I 'll just speak my mind, and tell you, it 's not like your honour to plague Miss Nelly as you have done of late. God help you! we are all sorry for you, and would run to Gibraltar for you if it would do you any good; but we are not the kings of heaven and earth to have everything our own way, your honour!

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—Pray, your honour, have a little pity on Miss Nelly!—she's as tender as a lamb, and we are all fit to go mad to see her so sadly used; and I hope your honour will forgive me, but you must stop where you are till you think you can use her better!" And so saying, Jerry scratched his head, looked half puzzled, and yet desperately determined.

The captain fell into a terrible rage, heaping upon him every oath and epithet in his naval vocabulary. He looked wistfully round, but no one appeared; he hallooed, but no one came; and seeing that Jerry still stood resolute, he at length grumbled out terms of capitulation. The poor fellow instantly raised the chair on its wheels, settled his master comfortably in it, dropped on his knees, sobbing and begging his pardon, and then drew him home in deep silence. As they went along, the captain sat sullenly, curbing his wrath; but no sooner was he again placed in his old easy-chair by the parlour hearth, than down came the storm.

"Here, you old, ungrateful wretch, take your wages and begone!" exclaimed he, throwing down the amount of Jerry's last half-year's wages.

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"A pretty dragon I have been harbouring this twenty years, that would devour me at last when I can't help myself!"

Poor Jerry hung down his head, scraped on the floor with his foot, and said not a word—this was an event upon which he had not reckoned; while Miss Nelly and the whole household, roused by the captain's vociferations, gathered round in blank amazement.

"Jerry going!" exclaimed Miss Nelly, thinking of a truth her brother was gone out of his senses. "Brother, what can you mean? what can we do without Jerry?"

Miss Nelly's words only added fuel to the fire. The captain swore that Jerry and his sister had colleagued to murder him; and that if they did not depart, he would send them off. He then pushed the money to Jerry; and Jerry, making a most solemn obeisance, took the money into his hand and then dashed it on the ground—wiped the tears away with the back of his hand, and rushed out of the house, forcibly breaking away from the servants, who gathered about him to inquire what all this meant.

When he was gone, the captain, exhausted with

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his exertions and passion, sunk down in his chair, and sat there till evening in a deep and gloomy mood. Miss Nelly, no longer thinking that her brother was mad, begged, implored and wept to know what poor Jerry had done to affront him; but a silent frown was his only answer, nor could anything be learnt from any other quarter, for Jerry was gone nobody knew whither.

That was a miserable evening at Oakland Hall. The captain retired early to bed, and his poor sister went not to bed at all. The next morning, long before his usual hour, he rang to be dressed; and Miss Nelly saw him come down looking wretchedly ill, still petulant and silent, but sufficiently communicative to explain the affair of the preceding day, with many a bitter invective against his old servant. She said everything she could think of to palliate his offence; but this only was rousing another storm, and she was silent.

In a short time, in came Ned Seymour, to plead on the same subject. He sued heartily and eloquently; recounted Jerry's faithful acts and nature, and begged him to remember that he was odd in his ways, but had not the least spark of malice in him. Captain Kenrock listened with

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more composure; but, in reply, vowed it was an offence which he never could pass over.

Three days went on, and the captain became more petulant than ever. His chair again traversed from room to room, but there was no easy spot to be found; till, towards evening, sitting alone with Miss Nelly, he became more composed: a long silence ensued, which he broke by suddenly saying,

"This poor fool, I wonder where he is! There is no doing without him—I wonder where he is?"

Miss Nelly wept at these words; then she smiled and went out of the room. On re-entering, the captain said,

"Well, you 've sent for him.—Is he at home?"

"At home!" exclaimed Miss Nelly, in a tone unusually energetic: "no, poor fellow, he has never been at home for three days!"

"Where the deuce is he then?" inquired he with anxiety.

"He has been at Wood Leighton, drinking with some old cronies of his, lamenting his misfortune, which, he says, is all his own fault. Yesterday they were for coming in a body to intercede for him; but he swore, if they did, he would

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leave the country at once. Seymour has been to him, and says the poor fellow was drinking, singing, and crying like a child, and vowing he would rather have lost his arm than have offended you. Seymour is gone again to him, but I fear he is not in a state to come here to-night."

The captain became very restless and uneasy during this relation, and at length, unable to restrain himself, began to weep as if his heart would break. Miss Nelly wept too.

"I 've been sadly to blame," at length he said: "Jerry was quite in the right. He would have served me as I deserved if he had broken my neck—that he would, Nelly!—Come, cheer up! I 've been a confounded fool: here have I been playing the tyrant, and must kick my faithful old boy out, at last, for striving to cure me!—Come, cheer up, Nelly, and let me see him directly."

Miss Nelly wiped her eyes, and kissed her brother's weather-beaten cheek; but prayed him to wait patiently, as it was not likely Jerry would be able to come that night. But he sat with the parlour-door open, listening, and sending her out at every motion in the kitchen to see if he were come. Seymour at length returned and confirmed

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Miss Nelly's opinion. He had left poor Jerry in the height of glory: his old hat had been at the ceiling a dozen times; he lauding the captain to the skies, and drinking health and long life to him, amid half a dozen topers nearly as frantic as himself.

Captain Kenrock was obliged to submit; and on looking out from his chamber window next morning, the first thing he saw was Jerry, with a brace of hawks on his arm; and Peter and Ponto, the old pointers, trotting after him across the yard towards the summer-house as if nothing had happened.

He sent for him into his chamber, ready to tell him frankly that he forgave the past. But when Jerry appeared, the words stuck in his throat; he seized the honest old fellow's hand and gave it a hearty shake. Jerry wept audibly, kissed the hand many times, and then rushed out of the room. Not a word was ever said on the subject.

The storm was over; the stratagem had succeeded; there was a flow of good-humour, smiles, and cheerfulness throughout the house that told the genuine joy of every heart. Alas! it was all soon to be darkened with a deeper cloud.

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The captain's complaint appeared to have left him—he even came again to Wood Leighton; but in a few weeks it returned with redoubled violence, and in the end put a period to his existence. In Captain Kenrock the world lost a kind-hearted and an honest man,—tinctured, it is true, with some human frailties, but possessed of virtues, and noble, sterling qualities, that far outbalanced the leaven of our common nature.

The burst of genuine sorrow that ran through the assembled crowd of rural spectators as his coffin was lowered into the vault of his ancestors; the grief of Jerry, who mourned and refused to be comforted; the manly sorrow of Seymour; the broken-heartedness of Miss Nelly, and the general sadness of the whole household, spoke everything that could be said for the goodness of the captain's heart. His domestics each received a legacy, according to the length of their services, and the degree of estimation in which their master held them; but there was not one who did not think his legacy dearly purchased by the death of his beloved master.

Oakland Hall is now a melancholy place. There still lives Miss Nelly Kenrock, a bereaved wo-

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man; there still lives Jerry, apparently attending to all things as when his master lived, and in appearance the same, but in truth an altered man—he has never looked up since that day: he eats little, talks little, mopes with his birds in the summer-house, and before long will follow his master to his last home. Peace be with him, whenever he goes! for he, like his master, is one of Nature's true hearts of oak.

SQUIRE TRAINTREE.

We have spoken of Squire Traintree as the other patron of Ned Seymour, and of him we must now say something, as after the death of Captain Kenrock the keeper was much more at the squire's than formerly; for though the squire was of a most parsimonious disposition, he had contracted a partiality for him, and because he was expert in field-sports, and was entertained without ceremony or much expense, he was always welcome by his fireside. Besides this, he and his old seat of Bellevue deserve a place in this chronicle: he belonged to a race of beings purely English, but

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to be found only in such secluded districts as this of Wood Leighton;—men they were, rustic in their habits, eccentric in their disposition, but yet perhaps as much happier in their secluded life than the generality of mankind, as they were yet more generous in their natures and faithful in their attachments. They were men who seemed to feel the full value of health and quietness; to know how much real happiness consists in a contented enjoyment of these things. Give them but fine weather for fishing in summer; plenty of game and good spirits to pursue it in autumn; a cheerful fireside and a merry tale in winter; and they were as happy as life could make them.

Bellevue might be said to be a sort of refuge for the destitute; for after the death of Mr. Pope, Harry Withers took up his quarters pretty generally there: and the squire sent through Ned Seymour many an invitation for Jerry to do so likewise; but Jerry's heart was too sore from his late loss for him to be lightly wiled away. We dare predict that he will never leave Oakland Hall.*

* Even since this page was written our prediction has proved true. Jerry died faithful to his old master's memory, and at his own desire was buried outside the church wall, as near to his remains as possible.

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But now for the squire. In his youth he had bid fair to leave his ample estate, preserved through a long line of ancestors to him, his father's only child, not much the richer for his possession of it. His hounds were heard sending forth over the country a music that called forth esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen in numerous array, to carry amongst his dismayed tenants destruction to fences, crops, and hoof-beaten pastures; and to reward him for the honour of their attendance by surrounding with vigorous appetites and boisterous merriment the noble profusion of his table.

His sideboards exhibited several pieces of costly plate, the dear-earned testimonials of the fleetness of his horses: troops of booted grooms parading in the paddock long trains of pampered and caparisoned steeds; huntsmen, in cap and scarlet, breathing the well-disciplined pack; rosy and richly-liveried servants in the hall; consequential lacqueys speeding to and fro as if on important business,—excited the admiration of the young and the fears of the old. Those saw only a high-spirited, open-handed young man, in the genial enjoyment of a noble fortune: these figur-

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ed to themselves a stern, extortionate steward, impoverished tenants, and even fancied they heard the sound of the axe, and saw those majestic woods, the growth of ages and the pride of half the county, piled on groaning drays, and carried away to repair the ruins of this thriftless life. These ominous imaginings were nothing abated by the reports of vast remittances during his long residences in the metropolis; much less by his bringing home a grand bride, rich in beauty, and accompanied by a whole troop of relations of the most social and expensive habits.

His natural prudence, however, recovered its dominion before a single hereditary oak had confirmed the bodings of the grey-haired prognosticators; and though the commanding influence of his lady preserved a numerous train of domestics, the beautiful greys and the goodly carriage, and a convivial intercourse with the highest neighbouring families, still symptoms of an opposite disposition began to appear rapidly in his character.

Their son, an amiable young man, who was extremely fond of agriculture, had married a lady as amiable as himself, the heiress presumptive of Captain Kenrock's estate, and lived on one of his

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father's farms. Both died early, leaving an only daughter, as beautiful and wild a young thing as ever found itself a caressed object in a new and delightful world. This loss was soon followed by the death of Mrs. Traintree herself.

The squire in middle life found himself suddenly a bereaved and solitary man. A decided disrelish for general society, begun in the indulgence of sorrow, was fed and fostered by the loneliness of his situation, till it became an unconquerable habit. His lady's relatives came about him; his friendly neighbours courted him on all hands, but he would not be won back into society, —nay, their very efforts wearied and offended him, and only fixed yet deeper the growing propensities and determination of his character. To rid himself of his officious friends, he unfitted his house for their entertainment: the hatchment which hung over the door was truly an outward emblem of the gloom that was within. The smiling, well-favoured faces, and detected jollity of his servants, occasioned their dismissal one by one. The carriage-horses were sold at the sale of his son's farming-stock; the grooms of course disappeared; and retrenchment once begun, did

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not stop with half-measures — the squire found relief and occupation in this indulgence of a latent principle.

Time went on, and the squire was left to the free indulgence of his own ways; and when the old steward died, he was replaced by the farmer, a quiet, discreet, plodding man, who lived at hand, and whose ideas of the value of money were in its accumulation, not in what it would purchase. In short, the amazing revolution became sensible to any one at a distance. Instead of meeting, as they approached, besides servants and horses, and guests numerously attended, as in the former days, and tradesmen bustling home, with aspects glowing with the sunshine of the servants' hall;—instead of hearing the shrill neighing of colts galloping around the rich inclosures, as if impatient of their future triumphs upon field and course;—instead of the loud cawarring of rooks in spring, soaring in a sable and chequering cloud above the lofty elms; and as you drew nearer, a fat spaniel, or a brace of greyhounds, with their meek and smiling faces, bounding to welcome you;—there was a moody silence, broken only by the scream of a peacock, the gobble of a turkey,

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or the loud quacking of a duck from the farm-yard.

And where, it may be asked, was the little heiress all this time? Living in this silent old mansion, a thing of beauty, of buoyant health and spirit, wild and wilful and untamed as a young doe of the forest, under the care of a quiet lady, a poor relation, who, in the brighter days of the family, had only visited there when sickness, sorrow, or any domestic necessity had made the services of a clear head, a warm heart, and a ready hand, things of value. And there the little maiden lived the first eight years of her life; then, her worthy female guardian dying, the squire, who doted on her as the very apple of his eye, reluctantly consented to her being sent to school under the more especial guardianship of his lady's London connexions.

We went one day to Bellevue, and I will describe it as we found it;—it must have been much in the state of Denborough Park in the latter days of the Grimstones.

The hall, a substantial stone building, flanked with a couple of square and projecting towers, and surmounted by a parapet of heavy turned

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balustrades, with a row of dormant windows in front, wore a melancholy aspect indeed. Many of the windows were constantly closed, and the doors and shutters exhibited that chapped and weather-worn appearance consequent on neglect. The very walls seemed to have a greyer and more deserted character than is found in an inhabited mansion. The slope below the front, which used to look so beautiful, with its rich, close-shaven turf, and neat, well-rolled gravel walk, winding down through the cool shade of lofty chestnuts to the mossy hermitage by the brook, was now shaggy with long grass, and the shady walk itself lost in a lofty crop of hemlock and wild chervil. The gardens, in the old style, divided by hedges of clipped box, were luxuriantly desolate. The box, disdainful of its former cubic shape and smoothness, quivered its young twigs in the breeze; bears and dragons of yew were become more shagged and rampant monsters than ever flourished in a poet's brain; and fruit-trees, long confined to the walls, had burst their bondage, and triumphantly waved over surrounding regions. Leaden images here and there of Pan and his satyrs, very much like those in the gardens at

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Newstead, wore most rueful aspects, green with moss and dishonoured by birds. After all, I love these old, desolate gardens; there is a world of poetry to me in the silence and melancholy of deserted and neglected grandeur, from whatever cause it may have become so — far more impressive is it to my feelings than the proudest display of magnificent prosperity.

We went down to the kennel in the copse below,—there all was silence and neglect. The wheel, mounted on a stout post, that had once borne the remains of many a worn-out hero of the race-ground or the fox-hunt, now was bowed in decay; the long accumulating pile of bones was hid in a crop of rank weeds; grass carpeted the floors and flourished in the troughs of the kennel-court; and the only visible remains of the former appendages of the place were the remnant of a dog-couple, or a rotten cord hanging on the wall. The stable and the stable-yard displayed a similar appearance: there too the grass almost concealed the pavement, and even sprang in lank and sallow tufts from disused mangers and window-seats. The old wooden dovecot was tumbling in; roofs of buildings, once well thatch-

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ed, but now only in patches, were green with masses of chickweed, and houseleek reared its old flower-stems along the ridge. Sheds partly sunk to the ground, scattered straw, and heaps of old timber mouldering in different places, with a few solitary fowls, or a pig loitering and grubbing amongst them, completed a picture of neglect and parsimony.

The sole household consisted of two ancient retainers of the family, Timothy and Dame Wantle. Timothy acted in the multifarious character of butler, valet, groom, gardener, coachman,—in short, acted in the capacity of all the former male domestics of the establishment: Dame Wantle in her sole person took the female department. Some few years ago this worthy couple had occupied a cottage which stood behind the rookery. The cottage rained in, and the squire was importuned to let Timothy re-thatch it; he hesitated, — the winter came on, and the poor couple were like to be drowned in their bed. In the emergency they removed to the hall. A man and two women servants were kept there at that time; but the squire soon found that the old couple were far more useful in the house than out of it, and

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therefore determined on keeping them there, beguiling them with the hope that the next summer their own cottage could be repaired. In the mean time the man-servant and one of the women married, and left the hall;—things seemed to go on better than usual. Timothy had a sort of universal genius — he could do anything in a house; and Dame Wantle exhibited talents in her way no whit inferior to her husband. The remaining maid-servant thought the hall dreadfully lonesome, and left in the spring. The squire talked of supplying the places of all three, but the new servants never came, and the whole burden of household duties and cares fell upon the old couple. Timothy was too busy all summer to undertake the repair of his cottage; and Dame Wantle, hoping that "for sure" the new servants would come at Midsummer, and then at Lammas, saw the next winter approaching without any prospect of getting rid of this burden which she had unwittingly taken on her own shoulders. At length, however, as she told us, she was coaxed into consenting, by the squire agreeing to have but two fires in the winter, and to let them sit all together on winter evenings.

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Poor Dame Wantle! she was eloquent in her lamentations over all her troubles. "Only think," said she, in a confidential tone, and shutting the door, though nobody was anywhere near,— "Only think of being turned out, as one may say, from that old cottage, where every floor-brick and bit of roof-timber was as well known to me as my own worky-day appurn; and to come here to live in this great ghastly place, with not a soul to speak to for half a day together, and where there are the most unaccountablest noises as ever was heard—night and day is all one, sometimes here and sometimes there, though I can't say as ever I seed anything. Besides," said she, leading us up into the long-disused but noble apartments, "the squire looks to have these rooms aired once in a while; and it 's not a pleasant thing to come into them, huge and awsome as they are, when he 's gone into the plantations—as he does, bless you! for a whole day together,—and when Timothy 's cleaving wood down in the yard for fuel, and lone I a woman, as one may say:—bless you! I be gone off strangely since I came here!"

And then she went on to tell us how one

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female servant had shot another with a pistol out of jealousy up in a dismal chamber at the top of the house; how the dogs in former times used to howl for three nights together; and how a man was found hanging in a chimney. "It made the very flesh creep upon her bones," she said, "to go up those old oak stairs, and to hear her own steps echoing all over the house, as if there were *limners* running about the garrets. And then to see those great gentlefolks in their gilt frames all round her, looking at her, turn which way she would, as silently and solemnly as if they were just going to come down to her!—those gentlemen, in their huge wigs, that died long ago, gazing as glum as bogles; and those brave gentlewomen, handsome enough to be sure, if they had not such a queer, ghastly look in their eyes! It made her heart sink to be amongst them with living Christians; but goodness keep her from being alone with them at night!" She said the squire had laughed at all this, and Timothy had said it was foolish to be frightened at a picture; and the squire had proposed, therefore, that Timothy should carry in the wood for airing the rooms, and mind the fires, the only

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occasion there was for entering them at all. But Timothy, she said, when it came to the pinch, was no fonder of the job than she was, and so from that time they always went together.

She said, she always fastened the kitchen-doors in the absence of the squire and her husband; but that even then her terrors visited her, and that she often woke Timothy of a night to listen to low screams and strange rustlings: his honour said it was rats, but for her part she had no idea of rats making such sounds as those. She heard also, long before daylight, a low noise like mournful voices discoursing together; and that again his honour said it was pigeons that had found their way into one of the attics; and maybe it was, for she herself had found a pigeon's nest in a half-opened church bible which was up there among some lumber. She showed us the very book with the old nest in it. The book had been reared against the wall, and had fallen half open against a chest that stood about half a yard distant. A more extraordinary situation for a nest could hardly have been conceived: it was in the book of Esdras that the bird had built.

There was a great deal that interested me

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strongly in this forlorn old house. There was the chamber and the dressing-room of the late lady; who, from the picture of her which hung in the drawing-room, with her little son on her knee, must indeed have been a gloriously beautiful woman. Her chamber and dressing-room remained as at the hour of her death. Her death had been sudden, and while she was in the act of dressing. The chair remained standing where she had sat; there was the sofa where she had lain, and the pillow on which she had breathed her last: the very dress of India chintz which she had just taken off had remained many years thrown over a large chair as she had left it, and only when it was grim with dust had her husband permitted it to be removed; it was then put into a richly-carved wardrobe, together with her other clothes, and was shown us by the old woman. There is something indescribably affecting in these preserved relics of the dead! Her perfumes, the large pearl comb she had used, an embroidered handkerchief of French cambric, a letter which she had just received, and the sixth volume of Clarissa Harlowe still remained upon the dressing-table, which from that day had been

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carefully covered with a napkin. It was three-and-thirty years since her death, and yet they remained as she had left them; they had never been touched since then, so the old woman averred, and I was willing to believe it. I would not have touched them with a finger for the world—they were holy and sacred to my feelings. Dame Wantle related how that the only time she had ever seen the squire very much enraged was when the last housemaid removed a fan from a particular table in the drawing-room —a fan which always lay in that one place, and which she supposed to have been madam's. She showed it to us: it was a fan of sandal-wood; there was in appearance nothing particular about it, but the inviolate care with which it was preserved told volumes for the heart of the husband; some affectionate and deeply touching memory was connected with it, and with its lying in that particular spot. I honoured the man who thus, after three-and-thirty years, kept thus sacred the smallest memorial of his wife,—and she not a wife that died as a bride, in the very heyday of their young affection, but with whom he had lived for upwards of twenty years:—both the squire and his

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lady were no common people. I entirely forgave him all his miserable parsimony, his neglect of this beautiful place,—his eccentric, almost ridiculous character: to my feelings he was not only a most unexceptionable gentleman, but one whom from the very bottom of my soul I honoured.

I said that Timothy was coachman. On one only occasion, however, had he exercised that office. It was about a dozen years ago, one bitter winter day, when his master's lovely grand-daughter, who, attended by her maid, was permitted to spend the Christmas holidays at Bellevue, ordered him for a frolic to bring it out and drive her to Wood Leighton. Timothy remonstrated, but the squire ordered him to obey. The carriage, therefore, which had stood in its place unnoticed for many a year, was dragged forth, aired, and cleaned in the best way Timothy could devise; the stiff harness was rubbed up, and the only animals of the horse kind which the squire's stud afforded, a superannuated hunting-mare, and the pony which Timothy himself drove in the old gig when he went to deliver out hampers of game, and to bring home from the town whatever articles were needed for domestic consumption, were put into

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it: a rare pair of horses were these! Moreover, the day was one of driving snow; and Timothy's appearance in the driving-box was more in accordance with the equipage than with the well-dressed beautiful girl he was about to attend. His long, lank figure was arrayed in his Sunday habiliments, it is true; but, on account of the weather, he put over all his dingy-coloured carter's frock: his wide-brimmed, slouched hat was defended by a hayband to keep out the weather, but looked far more like a burlesque imitation of a lace band; his legs were also well defended by wrappings of the same: his shoes, each measuring fifteen inches, for which he was particularly admired in winter, leaving such a track in the snow as was known the whole country over,—his shoes, well oiled, (for poor Timothy had intended to make his very best appearance,) projected conspicuously over the foot-board; and his lean, grey-bearded visage, tinged blue with the bitter cold of the day, presented a striking contrast to those of the spruce handmaid, and little, mischievous, laughing damsel within, who was wonderfully entertained at the grotesque display of her coachman and equipage, and at the

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amusement and astonishment which they evidently created.

In this unique manner, however, Timothy conveyed his lady to Wood Leighton and back with perfect safety, to the no little credit of his coachmanship. But great was the scandal of the affair to the mind of dear Mrs. Nelly Kenrock, who, in her own ancient phaeton, two days afterwards, came up to Bellevue to insist upon no such future extravagances: and the good captain himself remonstrated also by letter, praying that his young kinswoman might not again be permitted to make herself the country's talk. Whether the young lady might have abided by these good counsels or not, it is impossible to say, had not any further frolic of this kind been prevented by Timothy's running his old gig against a post on his return from Oakland Hall, where he had been with the squire's reply, and shivered the wheel to splinters. A new wheel was out of the question, and Timothy therefore had recourse to the wheels of the carriage; first he tried the little wheel, then the large one, but neither would exactly match; and Timothy, therefore, who never was at a loss for a resource, took the two

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hind wheels, and was soon established again with a well-repaired vehicle.

The daily set-out of the squire himself was nearly as picturesque as that of his jottery-man. He was mounted on the old hunting-mare, a capacious game-bag thrown across her; his gun slung behind him, and under his arm suspended a small bag containing saws, pruning-knives, and other implements of exercise in his plantations, followed by his two old slouch-mouthed Spanish pointers, and often also by Harry Withers, who found so many blackthorns and hazels in the woods, that his rack under the ceiling of his room at Wood Leighton was never so replenished, although he supplied the whole neighbourhood with walking-sticks.

It was at this place and among these people that Ned Seymour now was more frequently to be found than at Oakland Hall; and during the winter that we were at Wood Leighton, a circumstance occurred which we will relate as we heard it from one of the party.

One evening in the beginning of December, the household was assembled before the fire of the old servants' hall, which was the room prin-

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cipally used through the winter season. They had come in from a long day's sport, and had despatched a hearty meal. Timothy had piled the fire with flaming wood; the dogs lay basking on the hearth, and all were occupied, each in their several ways. Dame Wantle was busied filling the tankards, scraping the dirt from their boots and gaiters, and spreading them before the fire to dry. The squire and Seymour were seated under the ample mantel-piece, their guns hanging over their heads, and, with their pipes in their mouths, were relating to each other leisurely the particulars of the day's sport—how every hare and bird was found, killed, or escaped, and all the causes and casualties, as if they had not been together. On the other side sat Harry Withers, who, with a needleful of good home-spun thread, after he had sewed on one of his coat-laps which a captious stake had torn off, was proceeding to attach more closely several buttons which hung rather loosely; whilst Timothy, having taken off his cradle-like shoes to afford his feet their customary indulgence of an hour's liberty on the warm hearth before he went to bed, sat with his arms folded, leaning

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his head against the wall, and in a low voice, not to interrupt the opposite talkers, was lauding Harry's adroitness.

"You 're a dab hand, Master Withers," said he; "you 've sharply put that in decent repair."

"Ay, sooner, Timothy, than you 'll put your garden in repair," said he, twisting his thread round the shank of the button.

"Umph! Master Withers, can you keep sparrows out of an unthatched barn? — that 's as good-like an aim as to keep weeds out of a garden," replied the servant-of-all-works.

"Have you seen the hothouse lately, Timothy?" inquired the other.

"Not I," said Timothy; "there 's plenty of work indoors."

"The pines are fairly pined to death," said Harry Withers; "and the vines, have you seen them?"

"No," replied Timothy, who never did anything without a particular order; "the squire has said nothing about them lately."

"Well, then, Timothy, they are coming to see you; I saw them this morning half-way on

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the journey, though it is winter: they have pushed out every pane of glass, and there are shoots as long and lank as your waggon-whip, flourishing and flouncing in the air as if they were beckoning for help,—they 'll be knocking at the door some day."

"Oddsbodikins!" exclaimed Timothy; "the squire should have told me of that though!"

"Oh, I warrand ye," said Harry, imitating Timothy's tone, "he 'll tell you of it soon, never fear!"

"Odd zookus, man! what signifies that," replied he, "now that the glass is all smashed, and I could have stopped those wankle withes with my billhook in a moment!"

"D 'ye hear that?" suddenly exclaimed Seymour.

"Ay," said the squire, turning to Timothy.

"Hush!" said Seymour, raising himself in a listening attitude, and assuming a solemn, eager air. "There again! d 'ye hear it?"

"By Jove! a shot!" replied the squire.

"The audacious villains!" said Seymour; "so near, and on such a night—as light as day! They

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are in the little dingle between the woods, where the hares come to eat the clover !"

In an instant all was in motion,—boots and gaiters were slipped on, and guns snatched down. Timothy sat staring and motionless, till they told him to be quick. He then slowly began to thrust his long feet into his shoes, either finding, or pretending to find, great difficulty in fitting them on : a gun was then forced into his hand, which he held as if it were red-hot. Dame Wantle wavered about, wringing her hands, and deafening the hurrying, inattentive people with her cries.

"Alack, alack ! will you risk your precious lives for a few hares ! Let them kill them an' they will ;—if they shoot a legion, there 's a power on 'em left ! And what 's a few hares to the precious life of a Christian man ! Lord bless ye ! sit ye down every one of you !"

Nobody but her husband heard her.

"And Timothy, must he too go !" exclaimed she, seeing them about to leave the house. "Pray, your worship, take care of him—he 's so daring ! Keep behind, Timothy—let your betters go first !" still cried poor Dame Wantle after them, as they were now hurrying through the yard. No one

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heard her but Timothy; and he, with perfect obedience, did let his betters go first!"

It was such a night as Seymour had said. The moon rode resplendently through the blue lofty sky, showing each separate tree of the leafless woods as they passed, and the twinkling of the rime upon the crisp, frosty grass. Dame Wantle listened eagerly on the lawn, whither she had unconsciously followed them. Shot after shot was heard in the woods for about a quarter of an hour, and then all was silent: she hoped the poachers had decamped at the approach of the squire's party; but at length the firing of another gun was heard, accompanied with the howling of the dogs. Dame Wantle sunk to the earth: on recovering, all was profoundly still. She listened in breathless expectancy, agitated by mingled horrid fears, and fancies of approaching footsteps, and bleeding spectres, altogether confused and bewildered, and believing it was already past midnight, when a hasty step was really perceived at a distance; and, as it neared, the moon revealed the long, lank figure of Timothy bearing towards her with astonishing speed.

"Heh, Timothy!" gasped Dame Wantle, as

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he rushed past with a ghastly stare towards the house; where, on following him, she found him stretched on the floor.

Loud and reiterated were Dame Wantle's queries and complaints, but for a long time Timothy noticed her not; he appeared lost in a wild amaze, and often started and looked to the door as if he feared an enemy. It was not till really past midnight that the old woman could catch the words, "Murdered! all murdered!"

Dame Wantle's horror literally lifted her cap on her head, and with stiff hands stretched out, staring eyes and mouth agape, she stood in speechless horror. Timothy, in the mean time, who had recovered some degree of volition, barred and bolted and double-locked all the doors.

"Oh! oh! oh!" at length ejaculated the old woman, sinking into a chair with a weight like lead. Timothy ran up to her; her head hung back, her arms dropped powerless by her sides, and the poor husband believed of a truth that she too was dead.

While Timothy stood beside her without thought or motion, the latch was lifted, the door was shaken, and strange, incomprehensible noises

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were heard outside. Dame Wantle opened her eyes and stared about in horrified wonder. "Oh, Timothy!" groaned she; "Ho!" re-echoed Timothy, and again the door shook violently.

"Lord have mercy on us! Lord have mercy on us!" said the old woman, in a husky voice, like one who speaks in the nightmare.

The door shook, and sounds which the poor couple could not comprehend echoed outside.

"Down on your knees, Timothy! down on your knees!" exclaimed the old woman, pulling him down in an agony of fright, at the same time falling on her own knees and uttering an incoherent prayer.

"Open the door!" demanded a strong voice outside.

"What a couple of asses you are!" screamed a thin, tenor voice at the window, which to the horrified old folks sounded like the wailing of a ghost.

"Put out the lights, for Heaven's sake!" cried Dame Wantle, starting from her knees, and blowing out the candle; while Timothy, who was just able to obey, though incapable of originating any plan of defence, snatched up the unemptied gal-

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lon of ale and poured it on the fire, following it instantaneously with a bucket of water. The fizzing of the fire, the outbursting steam, the horrible stench, was insufferable. The place was full of ashes and stifling vapour. The poor old people were well nigh suffocated; and all the while the knocking, the rattling, the screaming at the door and window, ceased not. They were in a confusion of fright a long way beyond the reach of reason. A few moments afterwards, with what little sense they had left, they saw the outside shutters suddenly flung back; they heard a pane of glass smashed, the sash thrown up, and, one after another, they knew not how many persons enter—they did not faint—they made no attempt at escape. They stood side by side, poor old people, on the opposite side of the hall, incapable of resistance, waiting in frozen terror for what might happen next.

"Why, what a ridiculous business is this!" said Seymour.

"You old dotard!" exclaimed the squire, "what the deuce did you fasten the doors for?"

"Ha! ha! Timothy, my old boy," cried Harry Withers, "thou art a brave one!"

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"O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!" sobbed Dame Wantle.

"Come ye in flesh and blood!" said the hollow voice of Timothy, waving his long, lank arm. "Avaunt ye! avaunt ye!"

"O Lord! O Lord!" repeated she.

"Avaunt ye!" screamed Timothy. "Come in daylight an' ye will, but come not now!"

"Have done with thy folly, Timothy," said the squire; "we are not *dead!*"

"The Lord be praised! the Lord be praised!" ejaculated Dame Wantle. "Speak again, your honour: Master Withers — Seymour, are ye all there?"

"All, all, alive and hearty!" replied Seymour, striking a light.

"Avaunt!—not dead—all alive!—eh, dear!" said Timothy, speaking like one thawing drop by drop.

"Thank God! and praise Him, who is merciful!" said Dame Wantle, reassured by the evidence that the lighted candle gave her. "Well, now, only to think!—But Timothy is so soon frightened!—And what will your honour please to have?"

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"Come, Master Great-heart!" said Harry Withers, who was down on his knees, blowing up the yet unslacked fire, "lend 's a hand!"

Dame Wantle busied herself to repair the disorder into which they had thrown everything, muttering to herself the while—"Lauk-a-me!" "A pretty piece o' work!" "Well, God help us!"

"Fetch some dry wood," said Seymour: "this is all as wet as a thatch-sheaf."

"Heh!" sighed Timothy, "an' there 's no more in the house!"

"Fetch us some in then, quick, quick!" said Seymour, who was employed in cleaning the guns.

Timothy lit the lantern and went slowly out: he came in again, however, speedily enough.

"Hech, hech!" gasped he, throwing down his lantern, his white hair bristled out, and his face deadly pale.

"Why now," said Dame Wantle in an impatient tone, "what new fool's errand have ye come on?"

"He 's in the wood-house!" said Harry Withers to the squire, with a significant glance of his twinkling eye, and a shrug of the shoulders.

"The dead man!" said Timothy huskily.

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"Well, well!" replied the squire, "and what harm could he do you?"

"O Lord, to take him there!" groaned the poor fellow.

"Then you warn't so far wrong, Timothy, after all," said his wife.

"To take him there!" repeated Timothy, "an' me have to go there every day of my life! They may fetch wood as like—I never will." A cold perspiration succeeded the horror that had just before stiffened him, and Timothy threw himself into a chair.

Seymour went out and fetched in wood; the fire blazed up again; Dame Wantle replenished the tankards, and then sat down, covered her face with her apron, and cried hysterically.

Timothy kept his seat some time apparently unobservant of anything. At length he rose; he felt as weak as a child, and, with his knees knocking one against the other, he slowly approached the table which stood before the three, who, seated again in the chimney-corner, had filled their pipes and were whiffing away luxuriously. Timothy fixed his eyes on them, and perceived that Seymour had changed his dress, and that the squire was

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without his coat: he divined the cause instantly, and, as if by instinct, his eyes turned themselves upon a heap of bloody clothes in the corner. Timothy literally gasped for breath.

"Well, Timothy?" said the squire.

"Sir, your honour," began he in a hollow voice, supporting himself by the table, "let my wife and me go—we 're old folks. I 've a sourt of a natteral antipity to—murder." Timothy spoke the word as if it choked him. "We 're old folks, your worship,—what we have of our own will keep us while we 're above ground."

"Poh, poh!" said the squire: "go to bed, Timothy;—or, better, you shall drink." And he offered him a tankard of ale.

Timothy, from instinctive obedience, took it into his hand; but he set it down again without tasting a drop.

"Come, Master Timothy, you shall sit down," said Seymour, rising and giving him his place in the chimney-corner.

"Take off your shoes, Master Stout-heart," said Harry Withers, knocking the ashes out of his pipe against the large steel knobs of the grate.

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The poor fellow, cowed down into a state of passive non-resistance, did as he was desired.

"Only to think," said he after a while, in a half-angry voice,—"Only to think of taking it into the wood-house, an' me have to go there every blessed day in the year—as if there warn't another place for such an unchristian spectacle!"

"You should have been with us, Timothy, to have directed us better," said the squire.

"Heh!" groaned Timothy, "a pretty winter's work lies before me now—to chop fresh wood! Such dry and picked wood as that was! But I shall never fetch another bit of it out!—it may rot there for me!"

And Timothy was as good as his word. The wood, I have heard, still remains there. Timothy began on the morrow to cut a fresh supply, and piled it, with wise caution, within the lobby outside the servants' hall.

Dame Wantle avers that the ghost of the dead poacher walks duly; and moreover, that she has never been her own proper woman since that terrible night. The squire and Seymour had a grief of their own which we have not yet spoken of: one of the famous Spanish pointers

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was shot in the affray. The squire shed tears over his favourite, and Seymour declared that nothing had hurt him so much for many a day as the death of that fine creature. Poor Sancho, for such was the dog's name, was buried the next day in the garden. The squire talked of having a tomb erected over him; but it has not yet been done, and most probably never will. A very touching anecdote is related of the extraordinary attachment and almost inconsolable grief of Don, his canine companion: he refused to eat for many days, and even, though the weather set in intensely cold directly after, could only be removed from the grave by absolute violence.

It only remains for us to say, that when the squire and his party reached the hollow which Seymour had mentioned, they found the poachers, nearly twice their own number, drawn up in array to meet them. The place was a wild hollow which had once been a gravel-pit, now overgrown with brushwood and tall trees; it was the poachers' rendezvous. The squire spoke to them as he came up, both as a neighbour and as a magistrate: their answer was the firing of their

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guns. Fortunately, the trees made the place so dark that they could not take an aim; but they then rushed forward, swearing desperately against the squire as a rigorous enforcer of the game-laws, and against Seymour, not only for being his abettor, but for many another offence which he had given them. The party from the hall then fired, and one man fell. A terrible struggle ensued to get possession of the body; and during this time a gun was fired by one of the poachers, and the dog killed: it was done with the intention of turning the squire's attention from their fallen comrade, for his attachment to his dogs was well known. The rage of the squire on hearing the yells of his favourite incensed him still more against the poachers, and he swore that not one man of them should escape alive while they kept possession of the body. They instantly reloaded their guns; but before they were fired, they heard, down in the hollow, the retreating steps of the poachers,—and after waiting till they were lost in the distance of the next field, they returned home, bearing with them the body of the man, and that of the far more lamented hound.

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CONCLUSION.

THE stories and sketches with which I have filled these volumes are some of the many I was enabled to glean up in our year's residence at Wood Leighton. Many still remain: but in these days, it is not as it was when Richardson put forth his seven and nine volumes; we of the modern school are restricted to three,—and three volumes will not hold everything.

Wood Leighton is a rare treasury of old histories—blessings on the ancient town, and the beautiful country that lies around it! There is not a cottage there without its pleasant or its sad little bit of human history; nor a grange nor hall but has traditions and memories lying thick about it as leaves in the woods of Valambrosa. And the best of it is, there runs no canal

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thereabout; there is no projected "main" or "branch" line of railroad which will cut up its sweet woodlands and pastoral meadows, and bring thither a bustle and a stir, and change the quiet simplicity, old-fashioned faith, and cordial hospitality of its people, into the misbelieving, suspicious, worldly-wise, money-getting spirit of present manners.

Blessings on the old town I say again, with its antiquated houses, venerable cross and church! Blessings on its people, quaint and kind and simple-hearted as they are! And our friends the Somers', ten thousand blessings on them! we came to them strangers, but we part from them as if we were all of one family!

And yet what changes will probably happen in that united and happy family in a very little time! Elizabeth will be married to a distant place; a sweet parsonage in a distant county will ere long receive her. Charles Harwood's passion for the sea grows and assumes a determination that will not be controlled. Mr. and Mrs. Somers will in all likelihood be soon left in their pleasant habitation, but shorn of many

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of the charms of their existence. Yet, why anticipate? All yet is there, happiness, vivacity, enjoyment of life, and hope in the future. So let it be; and on so sweet a portion of human life let these volumes close.

THE END.

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